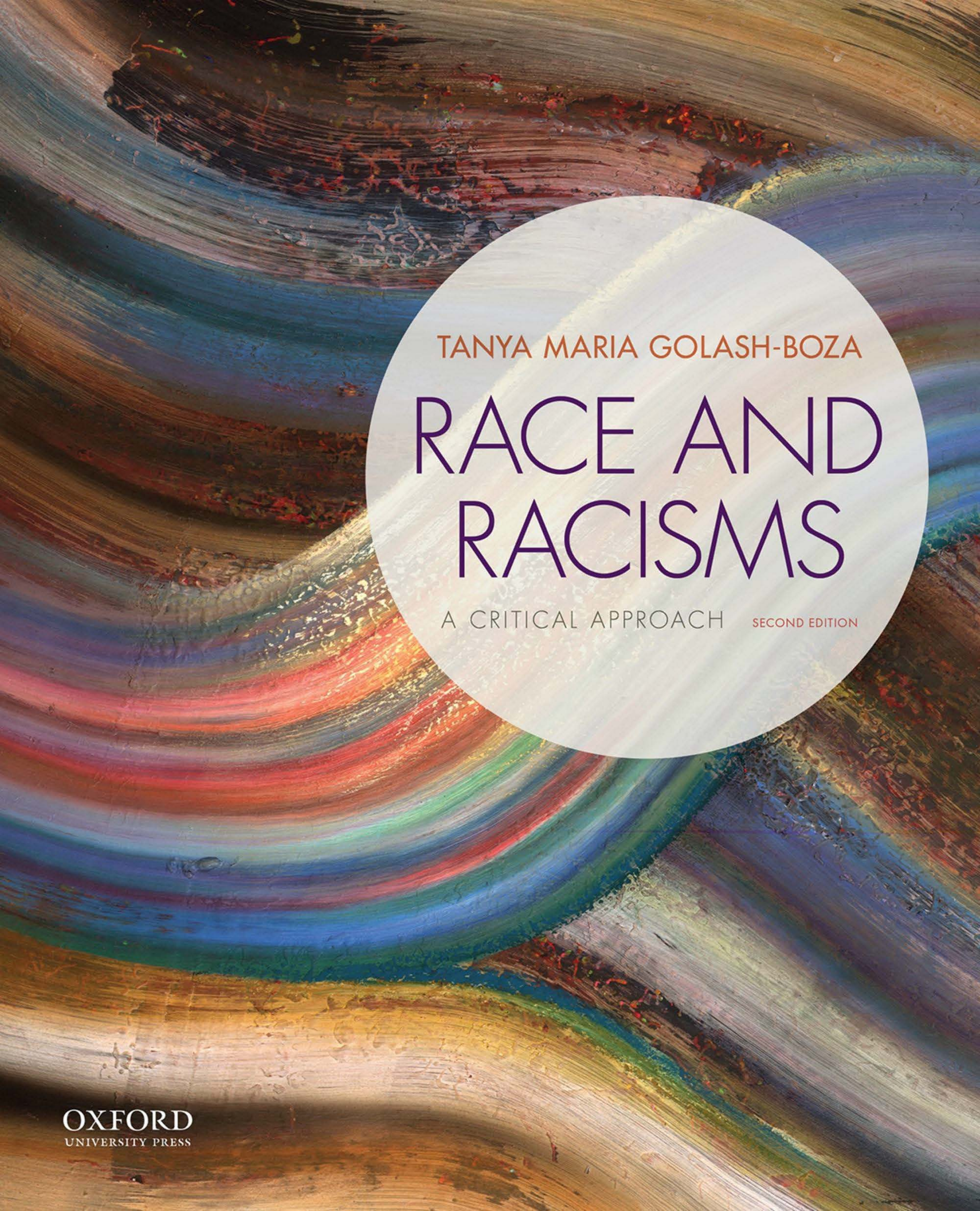




TANYA MARIA GOLASH-BOZA

RACE AND RACISMS

A CRITICAL APPROACH SECOND EDITION

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

RACE AND RACISMS

A CRITICAL APPROACH

SECOND EDITION

TANYA MARIA GOLASH-BOZA

University of California, Merced

NEW YORK OXFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Golash-Boza, Tanya Maria, author.

Title: Race & racisms : a critical approach / Tanya Maria Golash-Boza,
University of California, Merced.

Other titles: Race and racisms

Description: Second Edition. | New York : Oxford University Press, [2017] |
Revised edition of the author's Race & racisms, [2015] | Includes
bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017031716 | ISBN 9780190663780 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN
9780190663797 (eISBN)

Subjects: LCSH: United States—Race relations. | Racism—United States. |
Equality—United States. | United States—Emigration and immigration. |
Race. | Racism.

Classification: LCC E184.A1 G565 2017 | DDC 305.800973—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017031716>

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed by LSC Communications, United States of America

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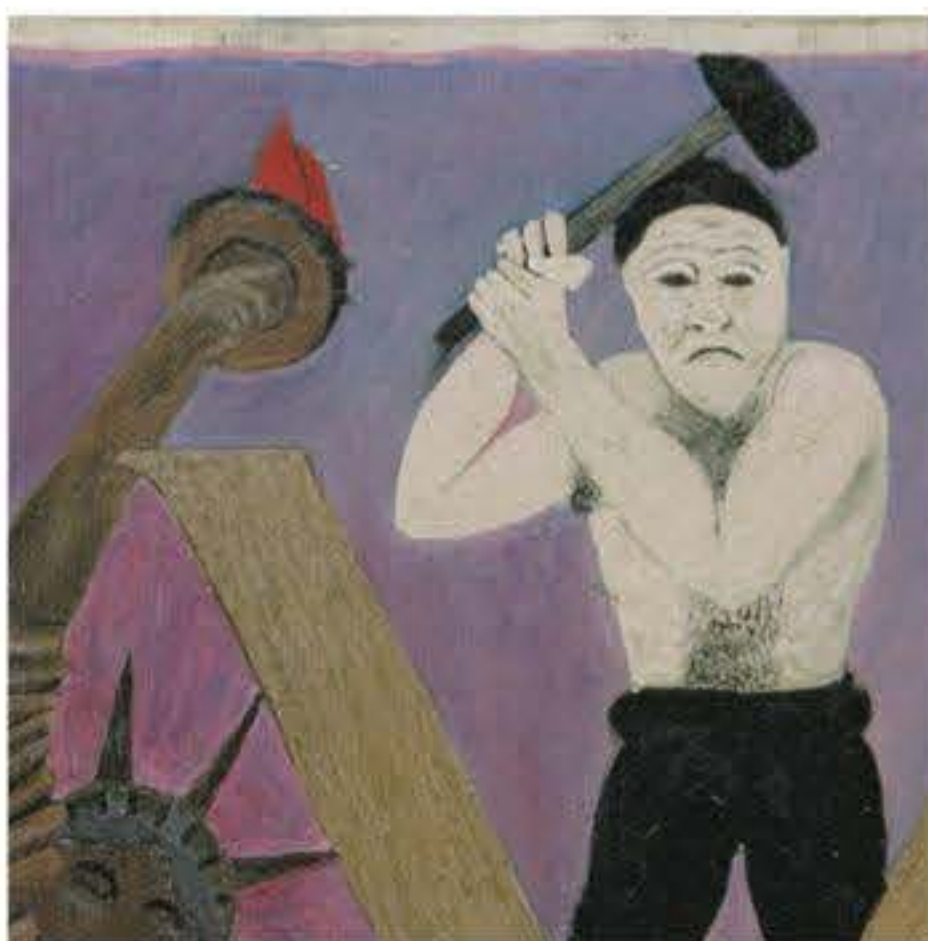
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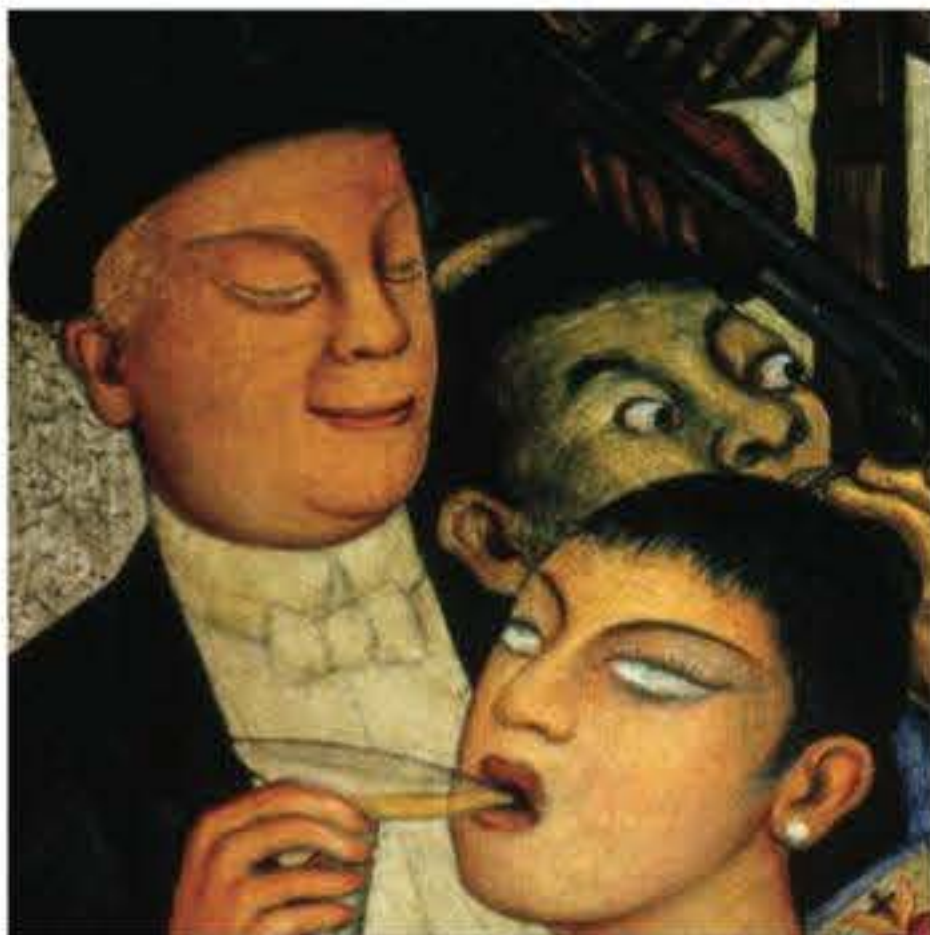
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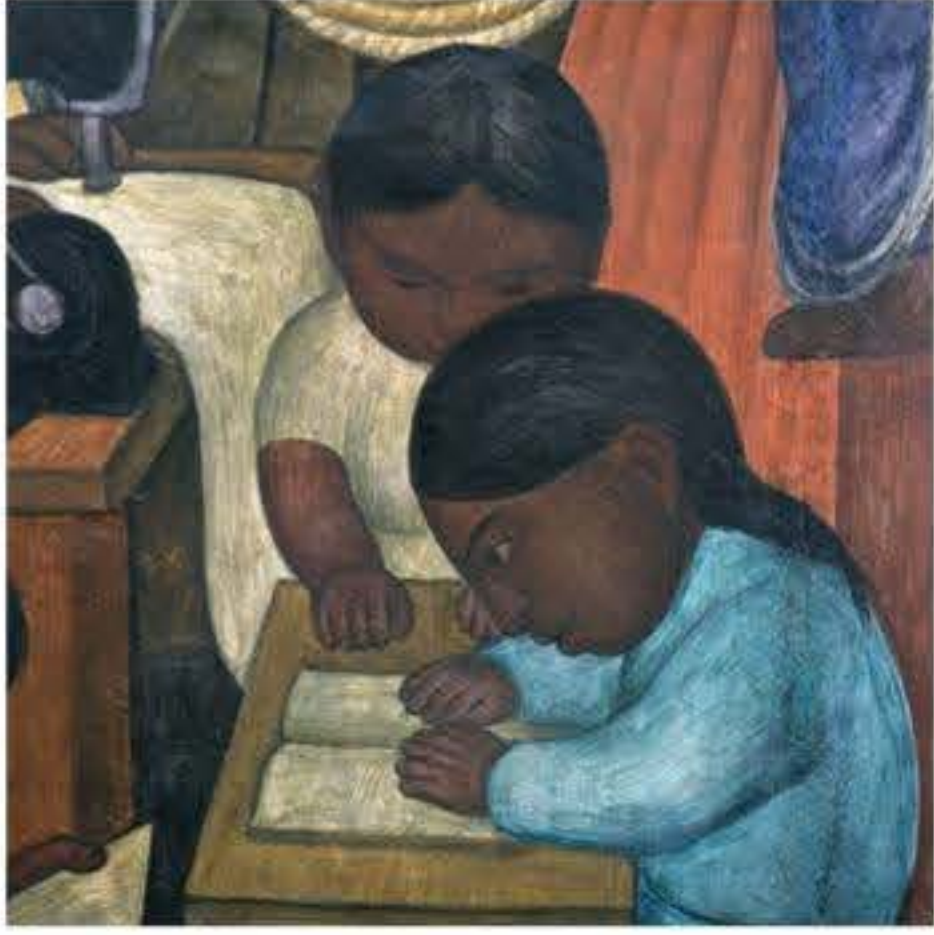
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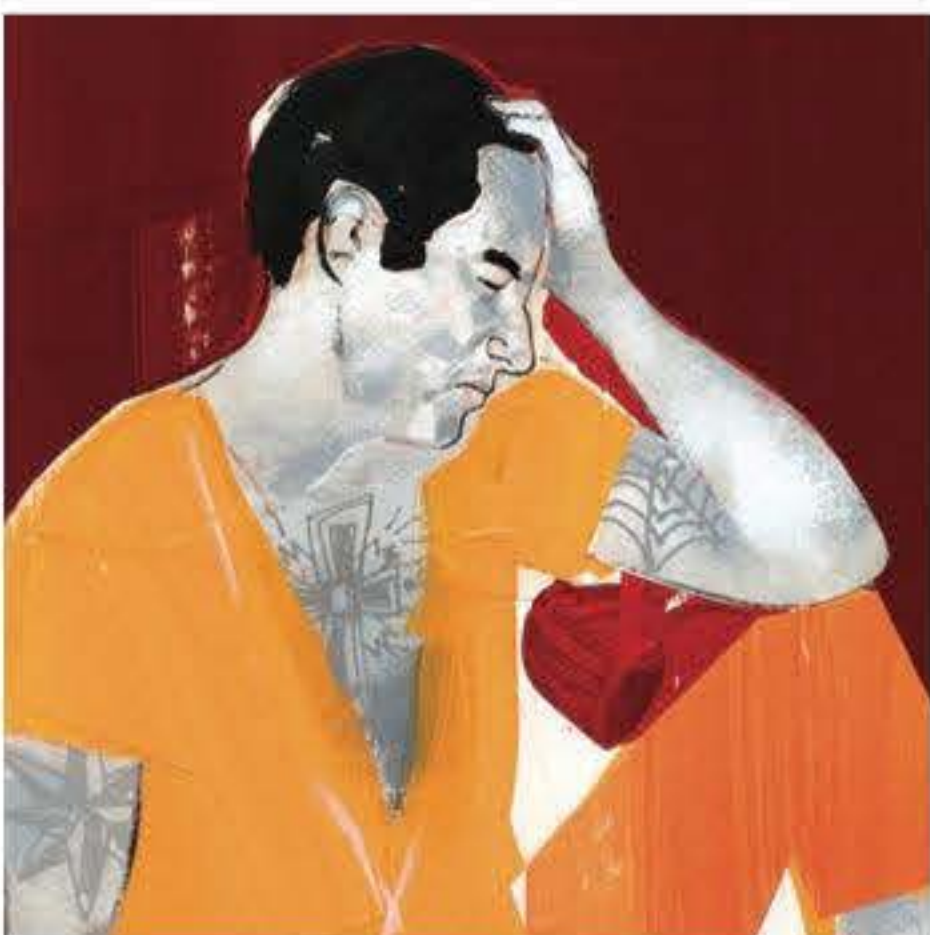
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About the Author

Tanya Maria Golash-Boza holds a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Maryland, a Certificate of Anthropology from L'Ecole d'Anthropologie in Paris, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a Professor of Sociology at the University of California–Merced. In addition to this textbook, she is the author of four books, *Deported* (2015), *Due Process Denied* (2012), *Immigration Nation* (2012), and *Yo Soy Negro: Blackness in Peru* (2011); and the editor of *Forced Out and Fenced In* (2018). She has also published dozens of articles in peer-reviewed journals on deportations, race and racism, and U.S. Latinas/os and Latin America, in addition to essays and chapters in edited volumes and online venues such as *Al Jazeera*, *The Nation*, *Salon*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Tanya's innovative scholarship was awarded the 2010 Distinguished Early Career Award from the Racial and Ethnic Minorities Studies Section of the American Sociological Association. In 2013, she was awarded the UC Merced Academic Senate Award for Distinguished Scholarly Public Service. In 2016, her book *Deported* was awarded the Distinguished Contribution to Research Book Award from the Latina/o Studies Section of the American Sociological Association. She is also the creator of the blog *Get a Life, Ph.D.*, which focuses on academic success and well-being and has millions of pageviews. She is the 2017–2018 Chair of the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Equity Committee for the University of California Senate and served on the Executive Council of the American Sociological Association from 2014 to 2017.

Tanya has been teaching undergraduate and graduate courses on race and ethnicity since 2003. Prior to joining the faculty at the University of California, she was an Assistant Professor at the University of Kansas. She lives in Merced, California, with her husband and three school-age children. She has lived in Latin America, Europe, and the Caribbean and speaks fluent English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French.



Preface

This second edition of *Race and Racisms* engages students in significant questions related to racial dynamics in the United States and around the world. In accessible, straightforward language, the text discusses and critically analyzes cutting-edge scholarship in the field.

FEATURES

Race and Racisms includes several unique features designed to aid both teaching and learning. Each of the following features appears throughout the book:

- **voices** boxes highlight individual stories related to race and racism, bringing personal experiences to life.
- **research focus** boxes describe recent scholarship in the field, showing students that this is an active and vibrant area of interest for researchers.
-  **GLOBAL VIEW** boxes introduce race-related phenomena as they are experienced in other parts of the world, to help students look beyond race and racism in the United States.
- **As You Read** questions point students to the key ideas in each chapter.
- **Chapter-opening excerpts** provide relevant readings as an entry point into the material.
- **Marginal Glossary** definitions reinforce key concepts.
- **[NEW] Check Your Understanding** chapter summaries are now structured around the As You Read questions, incorporating both **Review** and **Critical Thinking** questions.
- **[NEW] At a Glance** infographics show striking statistics in a visually powerful way.
- **[NEW] Talking about Race** guidelines in the front matter and at the end of each chapter suggest ways to approach discussions about race and racism.

NEW IN THIS EDITION

The goal for the second edition of *Race and Racisms* was not merely to keep up with our changing world but to invite students to consider their own role in it. Each chapter has been carefully updated to reflect current issues and events as well as the latest data and research. Beyond these updates, new stories and examples throughout engage readers in thinking about how racism could be addressed or alleviated. Highlights of this edition include:

- Expanded coverage of Arab and Middle Eastern Americans, in addition to new topics such as Islamophobia.
- The chapter on theory is now introduced earlier in the text (Chapter 4) to provide a framework for material that follows.
- New Voices or Research Focus sidebars in every chapter.
- New features: At a Glance infographics, Check Your Understanding summaries, and Talking about Race guidelines and prompts.

Following this preface, we include an overview for the new Talking about Race feature. We hope this overview, **Talking About Race Outside the Classroom**, will serve as a practical guide on how to have thoughtful, informed, rational discussions about race and racism. These are sensitive and emotional topics that many people have difficulty approaching. This overview encourages students to engage in constructive conversations about race and provides tips for countering racist ideology. At the end of each chapter, a brief Talking about Race section provides some more specific suggestions for approaching these conversations.

NEW MATERIAL BY CHAPTER

1 The Origin of the Idea of Race

- New Research Focus box: Slave Flights and Runaway Communities in Colonial Angola (p. 14)
- New infographic on servitude, slavery, and genocide in the Americas (p. 17)

2 Race, Immigration, and Citizenship from the 1840s to the 1920s

- New Research Focus box: Chinese Exclusion and Gatekeeping Ideology (p. 44)

3 Racial Ideologies from the 1920s to the Present

- New discussion of Black Lives Matter and high-profile killings by police (p. 69)
- New discussion of race in recent politics (p. 86)

4 Sociological Theories of Racism

- New opening excerpt from *Muslim Girl: A Coming of Age* by Amani Al-Khatahtbeh (p. 96)
- New Research Focus box: Examining Legitimized Racism against Indigenous Peoples (p. 114)
- New discussion: Islamophobia and Anti-Arab Racism (p. 119)

5 Racism in the Media: The Spread of Ideology

- New opening excerpt from *We Gon' Be Alright: Notes on Race and Resegregation* by Jeff Chang (p. 128)
- New Voices boxes on *Black-ish* (p. 135) and *Homeland* (p. 139)
- New infographic on the underrepresentation of people of color in the media (p. 131)
- New Research Focus box: Black Women's Lives Matter (p. 145)

6 Colorism and Skin-Color Stratification

- New Voices box: After #NotFairandLovely: Changing Thought Patterns Instead of Skintone (p. 180)
- New Research Focus box: Skin Tone and School Suspension (p. 173)

7 White Privilege and the Changing U.S. Racial Hierarchy

- New opening excerpt from *How Did You Get to Be Mexican?* by Kevin Johnson (p. 186)
- New discussion of the Brock Turner case (p. 190)
- New Voices boxes: Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person (p. 193) and Arab American—AKA White Without the Privilege (p. 201)
- Expanded discussion: Arab Americans, North Africans, Middle Easterners, and Their Place in the U.S. Racial Hierarchy (p. 199)

8 Educational Inequality

- New infographic on educational disparities and life-course effects (p. 229)
- New Research Focus box: The Asian American Achievement Paradox (p. 242)

9 Income and Labor Market Inequality

- New opening excerpt from *Divided: The Perils of Our Growing Inequality* by David Cay Johnston (p. 248)
- New Voices box: Latina Professionals as Racialized Tokens: Lisa's Story (p. 264)
- New infographic on income and labor market inequality (p. 253)

10 Inequality in Housing and Wealth

- New Voices box: Neighborhood Stereotyping (p. 293)
- New infographic on wealth disparities by race/ethnicity (p. 298)

11 Racism and the Criminal Justice System

- New Voices boxes: "Earl Washington" (p. 317) and Sandy Bland (p. 326)
- New infographic on criminal justice disparities by race/ethnicity (p. 318)

12 Health Inequalities, Environmental Racism, and Environmental Justice

- New infographic on health disparities and inequalities by race/ethnicity (p. 349)
- New Voices box: The Flint Water Crisis (p. 367)

13 Racism, Nativism, and Immigration Policy

- New opening excerpt from "Til Law Do Us Part: Immigration Policy and Mixed-Status Family Separation" by Ruth Gomberg-Muñoz (p. 374)
- Updated and expanded discussion: Immigration Policy and Nativism in the Twenty-First Century (p. 404)
- New Voices box on a Syrian refugee family living in the United States (p. 407)

14 Racial Justice in the United States Today

- New Voices box: Three Leadership Lessons from Opal Tometi (p. 431)

15 Thinking Globally: Race and Racisms in France, South Africa, and Brazil

- New Voices boxes on police brutality in France (p. 451), South African coloureds (p. 457), and the skin-color hierarchy in Brazil (p. 466)

ORGANIZATION

Race and Racisms is divided into three sections, each using an intersectional framework and global considerations to guide our understanding of racial dynamics in the United States:

- **Part I, Racial Ideologies**, draws from history, anthropology, and sociology to explain how racial ideologies were created and how they have evolved over time. This section provides a provocative historical and theoretical analysis that is rarely encountered in sociology texts, considering the effects of colonialism, scientific racism, nativism, and inequality. In addition, it invites in-depth discussion by examining prevailing racial attitudes in the context of recent U.S. history, the media, colorism, and white privilege.
- **Part II, Policy and Institutions**, focuses on racial inequality, educational and labor market inequality, housing and wealth, the criminal justice system, health and the environment, and immigration policy. This section highlights the empirical evidence for racial inequality.
- **Part III, Contesting and Comparing Racial Injustices**, considers racial justice, human rights, and racial dynamics around the world, helping us to look forward by looking outward.

ANCILLARIES

Oxford University Press is proud to offer a complete supplements package to accompany *Race and Racisms: A Critical Approach*.

The **Ancillary Resource Center (ARC)** at www.oup-arc.com is a convenient, instructor-focused single destination for resources to accompany this book. Accessed online through individual user accounts, the ARC provides instructors with up-to-date ancillaries while guaranteeing the security of grade-significant resources. In addition, it allows OUP to keep instructors informed when new content becomes available.

The ARC for *Race and Racisms: A Critical Approach* contains a variety of materials to aid in teaching:

- **PowerPoint lecture slides** to aid in the presentation of course material
- **Additional recommended readings** that delve deeply into the topics discussed in each chapter
- A **computerized test bank** with multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer, and essay questions

COMPANION WEBSITE

Race and Racisms: A Critical Approach is also accompanied by an extensive **companion website** (www.oup.com/us/golash-boza), which includes materials to help students with every aspect of the course. For each chapter, you will find:

- **Learning Objectives** that identify the concepts that students should understand after reading each chapter
- A **brief summary** of the broad themes of each chapter, to help students organize their thinking and reading
- **Web-based activities** that challenge students to apply their knowledge to a variety of Internet resources
- **Additional links** to websites providing supplemental information on the topics and ideas covered in the chapter
- **Multiple-choice self-quizzes** to help students review the material and assess their own comprehension
- **Filmographies** to illustrate and reinforce material covered in the book
- **Glossary flashcards** to assist students in studying and review
- A **YouTube channel** collecting films and videos related to key topics

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I travel around the country to give talks at universities, I am always pleased and humbled when instructors tell me they use this book in their class and when students tell me how much they enjoy reading it. The positive feedback I received from the first edition was a major motivation to revise this book. I have attempted to respond to the many helpful critiques and comments I received to make this book an even better tool for teaching about race and racism.

My interest in race and racism derives in part from my experiences growing up as a white child in a primarily black neighborhood. I am grateful to my parents for deciding to raise our white family on the east side of Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C., and for staying in that neighborhood to this day. Had my parents made different life choices, it is likely this book would never have been written.

Writing this textbook has been much less painful than it otherwise would have been due to the extraordinary efforts of the editorial team at Oxford University Press, especially Executive Editor Sherith Pankratz, Development Editor Lauren Mine, Senior Development Editor Lisa Sussman, and Associate Editor Meredith Keffer. My deepest gratitude to this amazing and efficient team. I would also like to acknowledge the design and production team at Oxford University Press, including Managing Editor Lisa Grzan, Team Leader Theresa Stockton, Senior Production Editor William Murray, and Art Director Michele Laseau. My thanks as well to Sarah Calabi for her photo research and to Patti Isaacs for creating the new infographics.

I did not write this book alone. In fact, many of these chapters were written in the company of fabulous colleagues in coffee shops and cabins across the United States. I'd like to extend a special thanks to my writing partners: Zulema Valdez, Ayu Saraswati, Christina Lux, Dalia Magaña, Whitney Pirtle, Amani Nuru-Jeter, Jemima Pierre, Winddance Twine, and Vilna Treitler. Thanks also to Maria Dueñas for her research assistance. A very special thanks to the wonderful scholars who allowed us to use their writings in new Voices sections throughout this book, including the Arabian Street Artists, Gina Crosley-Corcoran, Glenda Flores, Namira Islam, Daren W. Jackson, Stephanie Nolen, Whitney Pirtle, Ali Saad, Opal Tometi, and Sabriya Ihsan Williams.

MANUSCRIPT REVIEWERS

I would like to extend special thanks to the many reviewers commissioned by OUP who have taken the time to offer thoughtful comments over the development of this edition:

Jacqueline Brooks
*California State University,
Sacramento*

Katherine Everhart
Northern Arizona University

Michelle L. Holliday
Portland State University

Gloria Martinez
Texas State University

Karyn McKinney
Penn State—Altoona

Allan Rachlin
*Franklin Pierce
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Holy Names University

Alan Spector
*Purdue University
Northwest*

Shingueru Tsuha
*Pierce College—Los
 Angeles Community
 College District*

Jennifer Lynn Padilla
 Wyse
Armstrong State University

I also continue to be grateful to the many reviewers whose comments helped shape the first edition of this book:

Von Bakanic
College of Charleston

Tina Eyraud
*Northern Arizona
 University*

Ignacio Luis Ramirez
Texas Tech University

David Baker
Riverside City College

Meredith Greif
Georgia State University

Matthew Schneirov
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Matthew Oware
DePauw University

Adia Harvey Wingfield
Georgia State University

David G. Embrick
*Loyola University
 Chicago*

Leslie H. Picca
University of Dayton

Earl Wright
University of Cincinnati

Philip Yang
Texas Woman's University

Talking About Race Outside the Classroom

This book is designed primarily for classroom use. I hope teachers and students find the analyses, narratives, and data it conveys helpful in generating productive class engagements on racial justice, racial equity, and race relations. Learning, however, is a lifelong experience. And, as many of my students point out, few people you encounter in your daily life will be privy to all the knowledge and insight conveyed in this book. So, how do you—the reader—carry this knowledge from the classroom to your living room, to the coffee shop, to the dining room table, to the bar, or to your workplace? How do you talk about race outside the classroom?

Each chapter of this book concludes with a “Talking about Race” section that provides some suggestions on how to have conversations about the specific topics in that chapter. Here, I’d like to more generally address the issue of discussing race.

Conversations about race can be either premeditated or surprise. Premeditated conversations can be easier because you can decide ahead of time how and why you would like to broach a topic with a friend, family member, or coworker. Surprise conversations are a bit harder to deal with because you have to respond on the spot—and many times emotions can make it more difficult to have level-headed responses. Let’s consider each of these two conversation types in turn, as they are quite different and require different tools.

Let’s say an organization you are involved in has a policy that disadvantages people of color. You decide you would like to initiate a conversation with the leaders so that they will reconsider the policy. Here are some tips for having a productive conversation with your colleagues, drawn from a brief by the Annie E. Casey Foundation on “How to Talk about Race”:

- **Emphasize shared values.** Begin the conversation by focusing on what you all may agree on.
- **Provide more than a critique.** Offer a manageable solution that can be implemented.

- **Use narratives more than numbers.** Provide concrete examples of how people are affected by the current policy and how a change could benefit them.
- **Emphasize shared goals.** Present the change you are proposing as an opportunity for the organization to move forward.

It is great when you have an opportunity to prepare for a discussion about race. Often, however, we encounter racial microaggressions, macroaggressions, overt acts of racism, or other forms of bigotry and have to respond on the spot. Of course, you can choose not to respond, but even silence is a response in and of itself.

How do you respond if you experience a microaggression? What if you are sitting with friends and someone makes a racial or racist joke? What if you witness someone mistreating a person because of race? Having a strategy ready ahead of time can make it easier to respond in the moment. Here are some options:

- **Respond with silence.** If you are with someone who tells a racist joke, you can be silent. By not laughing, you are sending a message that this joke is not appropriate.
- **Leave the room.** If you are with a group of people, and the conversation takes a turn toward complaining about a particular ethnic group, you can exit the room or grab your keys and leave the event. That sends a signal that their conversation is not appropriate.
- **Question the statement.** If you are with a group of people, and one of them says that all black people are great dancers, you can ask them why they think that. You can push them and ask if they think it is genetic or cultural. You can keep asking them questions to help them see that their statement is problematic.
- **Ask the person making a racist statement if they would make the statement in different company.** For example, if someone makes a joke about Jewish people, ask them if they would feel comfortable making the joke in front of Jewish people. That may help them and others in the room see that the statement is problematic.

Hearing a bigoted joke or statement—directed at you or others—can stop you in your tracks. How you respond is a personal decision, one based on your personality as well as your relationships with others. It is important to know that you have options—ranging from silence to leaving to responding directly. Thinking through these options ahead of time will make you better prepared to respond.

RACE AND RACISMS



Employment of Negroes in Agriculture. Earle Wilton Richardson. 1934. Oil on canvas, 48 × 32 in. (*Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC/Art Resource, NY*)

The Origin of the Idea of Race

As You Read

- 1.1 What are race and ethnicity? What is racism?
- 1.2 How old is racism? How is race distinct from previous ways of thinking about human difference?
- 1.3 How did the writers of the U.S. Constitution think of slavery?
- 1.4 How did the Indian Removal Act affect Native Americans?
- 1.5 What role did science play in the propagation of racism?

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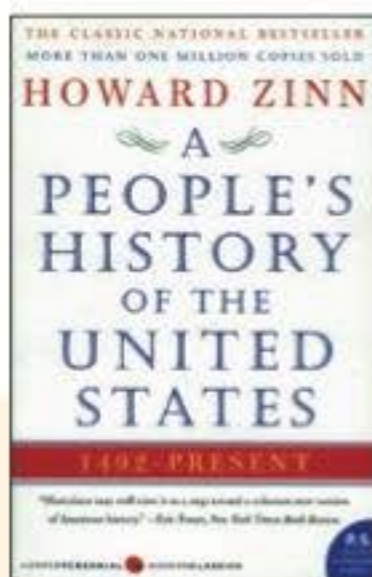
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In the 1600s, Native Americans, European colonists, and enslaved Africans found themselves together in the New World. Why did the Europeans believe they needed slaves? And what was the motivation for exploiting Africans in particular? In this excerpt from *A People's History of the United States*, Howard Zinn provides some insight.

The Virginians needed labor, to grow corn for subsistence, to grow tobacco for export. They had just figured out how to grow tobacco, and in 1617 they sent off the first cargo to England. Finding that, like all pleasurable drugs tainted with moral disapproval, it brought a high price, the planters, despite their high religious talk, were not going to ask questions about something so profitable.

They couldn't force Indians to work for them, as Columbus had done. They were outnumbered, and while, with superior firearms, they could massacre Indians, they would face massacre in return. They could not capture them and keep them enslaved; the Indians were tough, resourceful, defiant, and at home in the woods, as the transplanted Englishmen were not.

White servants had not yet been brought over in sufficient quantity. Besides, they did not come out of slavery, and did not have to do more than contract their labor for a few years to get their passage and a start in the New World. As for the free white settlers, many of them were skilled craftsmen, or even men of leisure back in England, who were so little inclined to work the land that John Smith [leader of the Virginia Colony], in those early years, had to declare a kind of martial law, organize them into work gangs, and force them into the fields for survival.

There may have been a kind of frustrated rage at their own ineptitude, at the Indian superiority at taking care of themselves, that made the Virginians especially ready to become the masters of slaves. Edmund Morgan imagines their mood as he writes in his book *American Slavery, American Freedom*:

If you were a colonist, you knew that your technology was superior to the Indians'. You knew that you were civilized, and they were savages . . . But your superior technology had proved insufficient to extract anything. The Indians, keeping to themselves, laughed at your superior methods and lived from the land more abundantly and with less labor than you did . . . And when your own people started deserting in order to live with them, it was too much . . . So you killed the Indians, tortured them, burned their villages, burned their cornfields. It proved your superiority, in spite of

your failures. And you gave similar treatment to any of your own people who succumbed to their savage ways of life. But you still did not grow much corn . . .

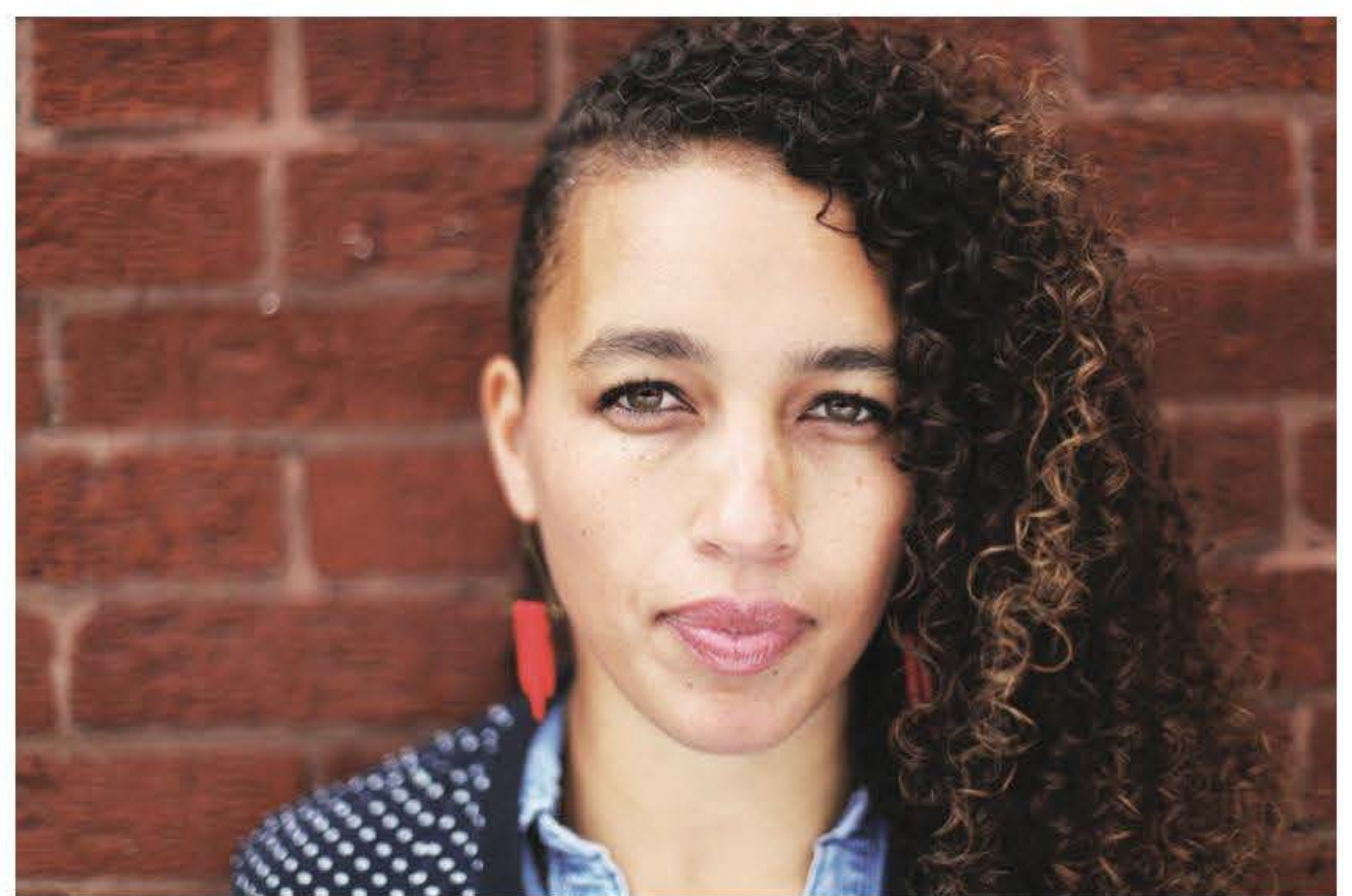
Black slaves were the answer. And it was natural to consider imported blacks as slaves, even if the institution of slavery would not be regularized and legalized for several decades. Because, by 1619, a million blacks had already been brought from Africa to South America and the Caribbean, to the Portuguese and Spanish colonies, to work as slaves. Fifty years before Columbus, the Portuguese took ten African blacks to Lisbon—this was the start of a regular trade in slaves. African blacks had been stamped as slave labor for a hundred years. So it would have been strange if those twenty blacks, forcibly transported to Jamestown, and sold as objects to settlers anxious for a steadfast source of labor, were considered as anything but slaves.

Their helplessness made enslavement easier. The Indians were on their own land. The whites were in their own European culture. The blacks had been torn from their land and culture, forced into a situation where the heritage of language, dress, custom, family relations, was bit by bit obliterated except for the remnants that blacks could hold on to by sheer, extraordinary pressure.

Source: Zinn 2010, 25–26.

In the colonial Americas, no one would have described the population using the terms *Native American*, *white*, or *black*. Instead, people identified themselves by groups such as Shawnee, Irish, and Ashanti. How, then, did our current racial categories come to be? What distinguishes the idea of race from previous ways of thinking about human difference? These are the questions we will consider in this chapter.

In the contemporary United States, one of the first things we notice about someone we meet is race. When we aren't sure of someone's race, we may get inquisitive or begin to feel uncomfortable (Dalmage 2000). It is as if, before interacting, we have to know if the other person



▲ When people in the United States are unsure of someone's race, many feel compelled to ask: "What are you?"

social construction An idea or way of viewing people based not on biological differences but on social perceptions.

race A social construction to describe a group of people who share physical and cultural traits as well as a common ancestry.

racism (1) The belief that races are populations whose physical differences are linked to significant cultural and social differences within a hierarchy. (2) The practice of subordinating races believed to be inferior.

ethnicity Group identity based on notions of similar and shared history, culture, and kinship.

is white, black, Asian, Native American, or something else. The perceived race of the other person affects how we treat one another and what we expect the other person to say and do.

It may be hard to imagine a time when the idea of race did not exist, when we did not categorize ourselves and others this way. But this time was not so long ago: although humans have long used various factors to classify one another, the idea of race as a classificatory system is a modern invention. Ancient Greeks and Romans, for example, did not think that the world's population could be divided into races (Eze 1997). Their system of social classification was much different from ours. Race is a modern **social construction**, meaning that the idea of race is not based on biological differences among people, even though race has become important in determining how we interact. It is a particular way of viewing human difference that is a product of colonial encounters.

DEFINING RACE AND ETHNICITY

The word **race** refers to a group of people who share physical and cultural traits as well as a common ancestry. The idea of race implies that the people of the world can be divided into biologically discrete and exclusive groups based on physical and cultural traits. This idea is further linked to notions of white or European superiority that became concretized during the colonization of the Americas. **Racism** refers to both (1) the belief that races are populations whose physical differences are linked to significant cultural and social differences within a hierarchy, and (2) the practice of subordinating races believed to be inferior.

The idea of race is slightly different from the concept of ethnicity. Races are categories of people based on a hierarchical worldview that associates ancestry, descent, and appearance with cultural and moral attributes. **Ethnicities**, on the other hand, are group identities based on notions of similar and shared history, culture, and kinship (Cornell and Hartmann 1998). Ethnicity also has a distinct historical trajectory from race. People self-identify as belonging to an ethnic group on the basis of a perceived shared history and a concomitant set of cultural attributes. In contrast to ethnicity, race is often an externally imposed category. In the United States, people are placed into races based on socially constructed, ascribed characteristics often related to physical appearance, such as skin color or hair texture, regardless of self-identification. Sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (1997, 469) argues that “ethnicity has a primarily sociocultural foundation, and ethnic groups have exhibited tremendous malleability in terms of who belongs; racial ascriptions (initially) are

imposed externally to justify the collective exploitation of a people and are maintained to preserve status differences.”

It’s important to emphasize that race is a social construction, an idea we endow with meaning through daily interactions. It has no biological basis. This might seem an odd statement, as the physical differences between a Kenyan, a Swede, and a Han Chinese, for example, are obvious. However, these physical differences do not necessarily mean that the world can be divided into discrete racial groups. If you were to walk from Kenya to Sweden to China, you would note incremental gradations in physical differences between people across space, and it would be difficult to decide where to draw the line between Africa and Europe and between Europe and Asia. There may be genetic differences between Kenyans and Swedes, but the genetic variations within the Kenyan population are actually greater than those between Swedes and Kenyans (Smedley 2007). Although race is a social, as opposed to a biological, construction, it has a wide range of consequences in our society, especially when used as a sorting and stratifying mechanism.

Race is also a **historical construction**, meaning that the idea of race was formed in particular times and places. Of particular note in its development are the eras of **colonialism**—the practice of acquiring political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically—and slavery in the Americas. The idea of race involves classifying humans into distinct groups with particular cultural and moral traits. Through this classification, Europeans and their descendants have used the idea of race to justify exploitation, slavery, colonialism, and **genocide**, the mass killing of a group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic or racial group.

RACE: THE EVOLUTION OF AN IDEOLOGY

An **ideology** is a set of principles and ideas that benefits the dominant group. The racial ideologies that operate today reflect our times and are rooted in the history of the Americas. The way we understand the idea of race today is distinct from previous ways of thinking about human difference. Before the conquest of the Americas, there was no worldview that separated all of humanity into distinct races (Montagu 1997; Quijano 2000; Smedley 2007). Understanding what race means today requires delving into the historical process through which the idea of race was created. Once we understand that thinking of people as belonging to specific racial categories is not “natural” but constructed, we can begin to think about why and how these categories were created. As we will see, European thinkers created racial categories to justify

historical construction

An idea or view that was formed in particular times and places.

colonialism The practice of acquiring political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

genocide The mass killing of a group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic or racial group.

ideology A set of principles and ideas that benefits the dominant group.

mass genocide and widespread exploitation. This brutal history in turn raises the question of why we continue to use these categories.

Historical Precedents to the Idea of Race

Until the sixteenth century, Northern Europeans had limited knowledge of the world beyond their immediate communities. Southern Europeans, in contrast, had much more contact with other peoples. Alexander the Great traveled to India in the fourth century B.C., the Greeks established trade routes with Ethiopia in the third century B.C., and Islamic peoples conquered Spain in the eighth century A.D. Yet this contact did not lead to a racial worldview. Ancient peoples did not divide the world into distinct races based on physical and cultural traits. Instead, Greeks had great respect for the achievements of Ethiopians (Snowden 1970), and Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived in reasonable harmony in Spain for hundreds of years (Smedley 2007).

Although the idea of race did not develop until later, these early interactions between Europeans and other groups did provide important precedents for current ways of conceptualizing human difference. The Spanish Inquisition is one example. When the Catholic Church began to consolidate its power in Spain under the reign of monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile (1479–1504), Jews were expelled from Spain, and converted Jews were subject to scrutiny. In 1480, Ferdinand and Isabella established a tribunal called the Spanish Inquisition, which was intended to ensure the orthodoxy of people who had converted from Judaism and Islam to Catholicism. The monarchs issued royal decrees in 1492 and 1501 that ordered Jews and Muslims to convert or leave the country. During the Inquisition, Jews and Muslims were obliged to convert, but conversion did not ensure their safety, as converts continued to be subject to scrutiny and suspicion. Moreover, people believed to be the descendants of Jews and Muslims also faced persecution. Discrimination against Jews and Muslims was more religious in nature than racial, yet the ideas regarding purity of blood that emerged set the stage for ideas of racial difference that were to become part of the European understanding of human differences (Quijano 2000; Smedley 2007).

Another crucial precedent to the idea of race is the English view of the Irish and later of Native Americans. England and Ireland were involved in centuries of conflict before the English first settled in North America, and English soldiers often portrayed the Irish as savage, sexually immoral, and resistant to civilizing forces. Many English colonists had been deployed to Ireland before settling in the New World. The ideas the English developed about the Irish may thus have played a role in settlers' perception of Native Americans as savage

(Allen 1994; Smedley 2007). This perception was a precursor to the racial idea that some humans were less fit for civilization than others.

Slavery Before the Idea of Race

Slavery was not new or particular to the Americas: the practice of enslaving people has existed since antiquity. In African, European, and Middle Eastern societies, conquered peoples often became slaves in the aftermath of war. As agricultural societies grew, so did the demand for labor, leading peoples such as the Greeks and Phoenicians to raid other societies for slaves. Slavery existed not only across societies but also within societies: people lacking the support of a family often had no place other than as slaves, and some people became enslaved as a means of paying off a debt or as punishment for a crime. Slavery of this form almost always involved persons of the same ethnic group as their masters.

The prevalence of slavery in ancient societies does not imply that racism existed then as well. Although some ancient writings refer to skin color, these references are rarely derogatory and by no means represent the general ideology of any ancient society. On the contrary, Greeks and Romans held the Egyptians as well as the Ethiopians in high esteem and admired their culture and way of life. These ancient peoples developed no known stereotypes of blacks as primitives or lacking in culture (Snowden 1983). Marriages between Egyptians and black Africans were commonplace in ancient times, and Muslim conquerors regarded anyone they succeeded in converting as brethren (Franklin 1974).

The status of slaves varied across societies. In some instances, slaves were adopted as kin after serving for a certain number of years; in other cases, slaves were permitted to marry and own property (Smedley 2007; Morgan 1975). Many slaves were granted rights not found in the system of slavery in the New World. These rights included access to education, the potential to obtain freedom for themselves and their children, the right to marry, and the right to own property. Until the eighteenth century, no society categorically denied the humanity of slaves. It was not seen as necessary to rationalize slavery by denying that slaves were fully human. Although slaves were at



▲ Although slavery was common in Ancient Greece, the idea of race did not yet exist.

times treated brutally, the humanity of slaves was never put into question, and slavery was never attributed to racial inferiority (Smedley 2007).

European Encounters with Indigenous Peoples of the Americas

Before the arrival of European colonizers, the Americas were home to over 100 million indigenous people. As a result of warfare, slavery, and disease, about 95 percent of this population was decimated during the first two centuries of colonization (Stannard 1993; At a Glance 1.1). The excerpted accounts in the Voices sidebar on p. 12 provide a small window into the depths of this massacre.

When Christopher Columbus encountered the native peoples of the Caribbean islands in 1492, he found them to be peaceable and generous. Despite the Spaniards' initial admiration for the indigenous people, the relations between the two groups soon deteriorated, as it became clear that the Spaniards' primary motive was to extract gold from the Americas. Intent upon taking as much gold as possible, the Spaniards used their weaponry to overpower and enslave the people indigenous to the Americas to compel them to



> When Christopher Columbus encountered the native peoples of the Caribbean, he found them to be peaceable and generous.

find gold and silver for the Spaniards to take back to Spain (Todorov 1984). The abuse the Caribbean peoples suffered at the hands of the Spaniards was devastating: the Arawaks of Santo Domingo, for example, were reduced from over 3 million people in 1496 to a mere 125 in 1570 (Jones 2003).

Reports of the Spaniards' extreme cruelty toward the indigenous people of the Americas made their way back to Spain and eventually became a subject of controversy. Fifty years after Columbus's arrival in the Caribbean islands, the enslavement of indigenous people was outlawed. The Spaniards continued to extract labor from indigenous people, however, by relying on other systems of forced labor (Wade 1997).

One of the most remarkable aspects of the conquest of the Americas is that many of the civilizations in the Americas were far more advanced than those from which the Europeans hailed. Europe in the sixteenth century was quite a ghastly place, with frequent famines and epidemic outbreaks of the plague and smallpox. Large cities were pestilent and dirty, with unsightly open sewers. Crime was rampant. Half of all children died before they turned ten. Thus, we can imagine the surprise and awe that the magnificent city of Tenochtitlán engendered in the Spaniards who arrived there. Tenochtitlán, an Aztec city in central Mexico, had about 350,000 inhabitants—many times the population of London or Seville at the time. When the Spanish explorer and colonizer Hernando Cortés (1485–1547) saw this city, he declared it to be the most beautiful city on earth. His companion and chronicler Bernal Díaz (1492–1585) agreed, calling it a “wonderful thing to behold.” Unlike European cities of the time, Tenochtitlán boasted clean streets, amazing floating gardens, a huge aqueduct system, and a market more extensive than any the Europeans had ever seen (Stannard 1993).

Despite their admiration, the Spaniards did not preserve this city. The arrival of the Spaniards led to the destruction of not only this amazing city, but also many towns and cities across the Americas. The population of central Mexico was decimated in less than a century, declining from 25 million in 1519 to barely 1.3 million in 1595. This pattern continued throughout the Americas, so that nearly 95 percent of the native populations were destroyed in less than 200 years (Stannard 1993).

Slavery and Colonization

Africans were present in the conquest of the Americas from the beginning, both as slaves and as sailors and explorers. Spain and Portugal were slaveholding societies long before Columbus set sail in search of the Indies. Many, but not all, of the slaves in Spain in the fifteenth century were Africans. Some African



The Spanish Treatment of Indigenous Peoples

The following excerpts are from a 1519 report by the Dominican order about the Spanish treatment of indigenous peoples in the Carib Islands.

Some Christians encounter an Indian woman, who was carrying in her arms a child at suck; and since the dog they had with them was hungry, they tore the child from the mother's arms and flung it still living to the dog, who proceeded to devour it before the mother's eyes.

When there were among the prisoners some women who had recently given birth, if the new-born babes happened to cry, they seized them by the legs and hurled them against the rocks, or flung them into the jungle so that they would be certain to die there.

Each of them [the foremen] had made it a practice to sleep with the Indian women who were in his workforce, if they pleased him, whether they were married women or maidens. While the foreman remained . . . with the Indian woman, he sent the husband to dig gold out of the mines; and in the evening, when the wretch returned, not only was he beaten or whipped because he had not brought enough gold, but further, most often, he was bound hand and foot and flung under the bed like a dog, before the foreman lay down, directly over him, with his wife.

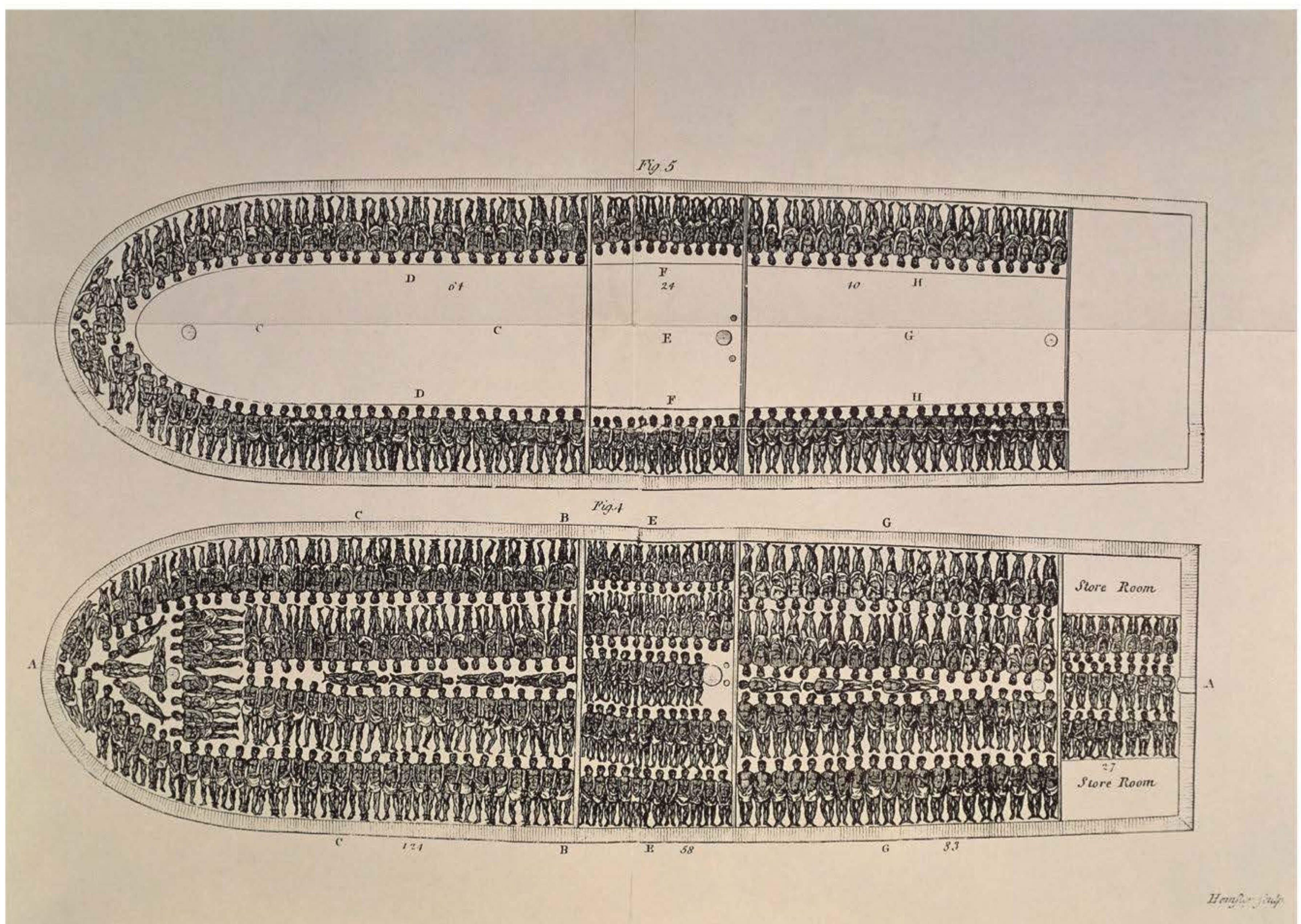
Source: Todorov 1984, 139.

residents of Spain and Portugal—enslaved as well as free—accompanied Spaniards on their initial conquest voyages to the New World. Juan Garrido (ca. 1480–ca. 1547), for example, was born in Africa and later traveled to Portugal and then to Spain, where he joined an expedition to Santo Domingo. Juan Garrido also participated in the conquest of Puerto Rica, Cuba, and then Mexico. Juan García (ca. 1495–date of death unknown), in contrast, was born in Spain as a free mulatto and traveled to Peru as a colonist (Restall 2000).

The Spanish colonists—often called *conquistadores*—endeavored to subdue native populations and to convert them into Catholics and subjects of the Spanish Crown. Their main goal, however, was to extract as much wealth as possible from the Americas. This extraction of wealth required labor, and the Spanish colonists enslaved the native populations to this end. The harsh conditions of this enslavement led to massive declines in the native populations,

and in 1550, the Spanish Crown outlawed the practice, although it continued to allow other forms of forced labor. The ban on enslavement of indigenous people did not end the need for labor, and the Spaniards turned to Africa in their search for workers. As they realized that agricultural exploitation, particularly the harvesting of sugarcane, could bring enormous wealth, they began to bring African slaves in very large numbers to their colonies in the Americas (Franklin 1974; Morgan 1975; Smedley 2007). The Spaniards and Portuguese had long been trading with Africans and thus could imagine the possibilities for slave trading with Africa. Notably, the Spaniards were well aware of the technological advances developed in Africa and did not seek Africans as slaves because they thought they were inferior. To the contrary, the Spaniards believed enslaved Africans would be a valuable asset. Consequently, tens of millions of Africans were brought over between the early 1600s and the nineteenth century as slaves (Bowser 1974).

Between 10 and 30 million Africans were brought to the Americas on slave ships. Nearly a quarter died while at sea.



Whereas the Spaniards had had centuries of contact with Africans, the English who settled in North America had had no such contact until the arrival of twenty Africans in Jamestown in 1619. Slaves did not become an essential part of the workforce in North America until much later.

The form of slavery that eventually emerged in the North American colonies was unique in several ways. First, slaves had no human or legal rights. They were seen only as property, not as people who could marry or own property themselves. Second, slavery was permanent and the slave status was inherited. Third, slaves were forbidden to learn to read or write, thereby ensuring their inferior social status. Finally, slavery in North America was unique insofar as nearly all Africans and their descendants were enslaved, and only this group could be enslaved. This unique system of human exploitation laid the groundwork for a new idea of human difference (Smedley 2007). Before delving further into this point, let's take a closer look at the English settlements in North America.

research focus

Slave Flights and Runaway Communities in Colonial Angola

Slavery was common in Africa well before the transatlantic slave trade. And for as long as slavery existed, so did slave rebellions and runaway slave communities. Brazilian historian Roquinaldo Ferreira has studied these forms of resistance in colonial Angola, a country in southwestern Africa, focusing on the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

Ferreira argues that slave flight and the formation of runaway slave communities were frequent in Angola, which the Portuguese colonized in 1575. His work shows that these factors disrupted internal trade networks and impeded Portuguese plans to develop a plantation system there. Slaves played an important role in Angola's economy during this period, working in both urban and farm settings. Their resistance posed major problems for the Portuguese colonists.

Local resistance to slavery also posed a threat to the transatlantic slave trade. Angolan slaves feared being sent on ships to Brazil and would do whatever they could to avoid that fate, including running away. Angolan slaveowners were thus reluctant to sell into the transatlantic slave trade, fearing that the sale of one slave would cause others to flee.

Some runaway slaves were taken in by African rulers. For example, in 1805 a ruler named Caculo Cahahenda hired a runaway who was a scribe literate in Portuguese. The scribe helped his new employer correspond diplomatically and commercially with the Portuguese in Luanda, Angola's capital.

Runaway slaves sometimes joined together in communities called *quilombos* in Portuguese, some of which became large and powerful. One was led by a former slave named Calumba, who commanded widespread respect from African rulers. In a Portuguese military campaign against Calumba, sixty-four individuals were captured, which gives us an idea of how large his quilombo may have been. There were at least five quilombos in Angola in the 1820s, and the population of these communities may have been in the thousands.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Portuguese colonial government consistently tried to break these quilombos. They were unsuccessful, and in the late nineteenth century, the Luanda administration signed a treaty that allowed the quilombos' existence and promised to cease attacks on them.

For Discussion

1. What are some differences between the Angolan slave trade and the transatlantic slave trade?
2. Why do you think the Portuguese tried to break the quilombos?

Source: Ferreira 2014.

Exploitation in the Thirteen English Colonies

In the late fifteenth century, Europeans began to explore parts of North America where indigenous peoples had lived for thousands of years. The English, learning of the great wealth the Spanish had accrued in the New World, were anxious to fill their coffers with riches as well. England first sent colonists to Roanoke Island in the late sixteenth century, but that attempt at settlement failed. The first permanent English settlement was at Jamestown in 1607. Much as Columbus had recounted in 1492, these English settlers reported that the local Native Americans were kind and generous and helped them to survive the unfamiliar conditions. Amicable trade relations did not last long, however, as it became clear that the Englishmen's intentions were not benign: they planned to take over indigenous land and resources (Morgan 1975; Zinn 2010).

Takeover of Indigenous Lands

European colonists engaged in constant warfare with Native Americans, often burning their lodging and crops and enslaving entire tribes. The English colonists justified their takeover of indigenous lands in religious terms. They interpreted their successes as God's will. For example, John Winthrop (1588–1649), a leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the mid-seventeenth century, wrote that the death of so many Native Americans as a result of smallpox showed that “the Lord hath cleared our title to what we possess” (quoted in Wood 1991, 96). It is important to note that when the English colonists interacted with Native Americans, they did not see them as belonging to a separate race; this idea did not yet exist. Instead, the English saw themselves as superior in religious and moral terms. These religious justifications, however, laid the groundwork for racial distinctions that emerged later (Jordan 1968; Smedley 2007).

The first fifty years of the new settlement in Virginia were full of hardship. Disease, starvation, and war caused extremely high death rates among both Native Americans and English colonists. There were severe food shortages, partly because the first settlers did not plant enough corn. Morgan (1975) points out that most of the settlers in Virginia were not farmers but nobles or gentry who thought food cultivation was beneath them. Although the settlers were too proud to grow corn to eat, they were willing to take up the enterprise of growing tobacco to sell and expected to make their riches in this manner. As there was no shortage of land in this vast country, the only commodity lacking was labor power (Zinn 2010).

The English colonists were notoriously successful at decimating the Native American population, yet less so in their attempts to use Native Americans for labor. When the English realized they would not become rich instantaneously through gold or silver mining, as it appeared the Spaniards had done, they turned to agricultural production to seek wealth. For this, they needed labor—lots of it. The English were able to enslave Native Americans they captured in warfare, but most indigenous slaves either died or ran away, leaving the English in need of more labor in order to accumulate wealth (Zinn 2010).

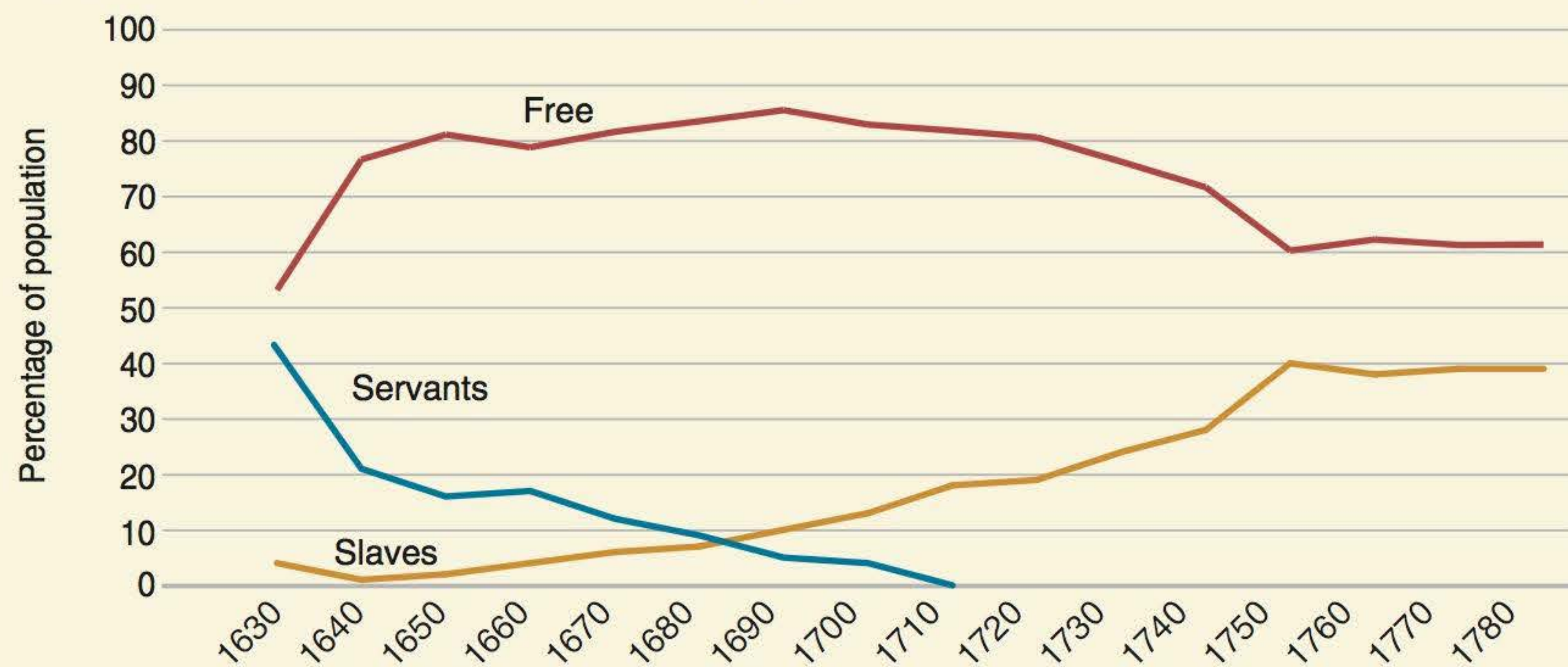
Indentured Servitude

The lack of success at enslaving Native Americans led the colonists to turn to Britain, where they recruited poor men, women, and children from the streets of cities such as Liverpool and Bristol. Englishmen also rounded up Irish and Scottish peasants who had been conquered in warfare, banished, or released from prison. Indentured servants from Europe who were willing to work for four to seven years to pay off their passage and debt soon became the primary source of labor for the colonies (At a Glance 1.1). The harsh treatment

AT A GLANCE 1.1 Servitude, Slavery, and Genocide in the Americas

Slaves and Servants in Population: Chesapeake Colonies

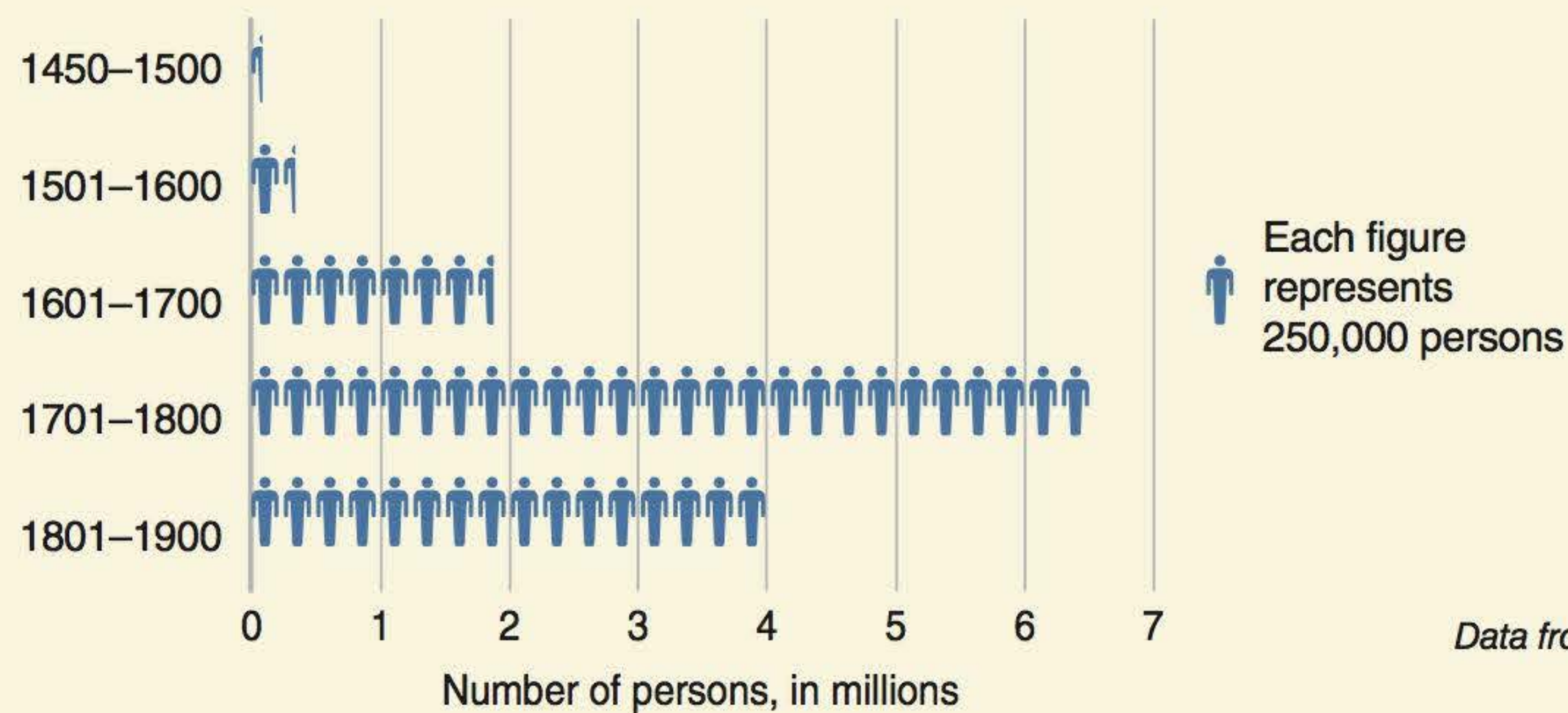
The enslaved population increased as the indentured servant population declined.



Data from Tomlins 2001

The American Slave Trade

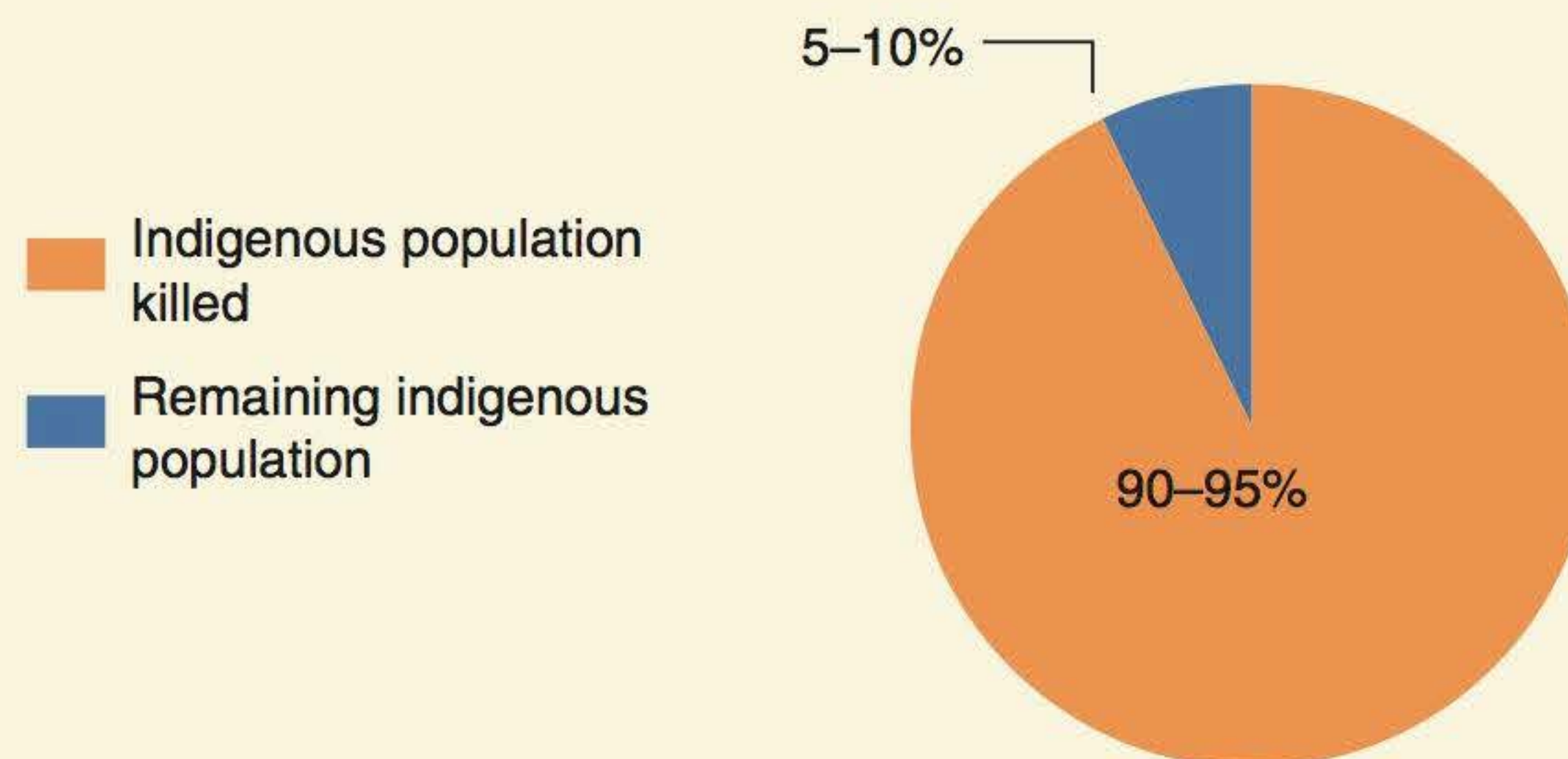
Between 1450 and 1900, 12,817,000 Africans were brought to the New World as slaves.



Data from Lovejoy 2012

Genocide of Indigenous People

Between 1492 and 1600, as many as 138 million indigenous people were killed—90 to 95% of the pre-1492 population.



Data from Stannard 1993;
Taylor 2002

of European indentured servants needed no justification, as servitude was a way of life in Britain at that time (Smedley 2007; Zinn 2010).

Throughout the seventeenth century, indentured servants endured harsh conditions as laborers in the colonies. Hopeful laborers continued to come to the Americas, despite the difficult circumstances, because there were possibilities for social and economic advancement in North America that did not exist in England. The flow of English laborers began to decline, however, with the restoration of the monarchy in England in 1660, as King Charles II implemented policies that discouraged emigration (Smedley 2007).

The Enslavement of Africans

In addition to bringing English laborers, colonists brought Africans to the colonies as slaves (At a Glance 1.1). Most African slaves brought to North America were from West Africa and were Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani, or Mada. In 1619, English colonists brought the first group of Africans to the North American colonies. These twenty Africans occupied nearly the same social status as European indentured servants and were soon joined by African slaves brought over by Dutch and Spanish slave ships. All of these early Africans were granted rights that were later denied to all blacks in Virginia. There is no evidence that African slaves during the period before 1660 were subjected to more severe disciplinary measures than European servants. Some slaves were allowed to earn money of their own and to buy their freedom with it. There are several cases recorded in which masters set up conditions in their wills whereby Negro slaves would become free or could purchase their freedom after the master’s death. The terms of these wills imply that the freed slaves would become regular members of the community (Morgan 1975; Smedley 2007; Zinn 2010).

The enslavement of Africans turned out to be particularly profitable in part because Africans brought with them agricultural and craft experience. In addition, unlike people indigenous to the Americas, Africans had immunities

The American Slave Trade

1492	1619	1660	1676	1863	1865
Christopher Columbus lands in the Caribbean	First African slaves arrive in Jamestown	First slave codes enacted	Bacon’s Rebellion	Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation	Slavery is abolished in the United States

to Old World diseases and thus could live longer in slavery. The initial justifications for bringing Africans to the colonies were not racial in nature. At the time, slavery was an accepted social system. To the extent that a justification was offered, it was that Africans were heathens and their enslavement would ensure their salvation (Smedley 2007). Over time, racial justifications for the enslavement of Africans emerged.

The Legal Codification of Racial Differences

Slave codes of the 1660s spelled out the legal differences between African slaves and European indentured servants. In 1667, Virginia issued a decree that slaves who had converted to Christianity could continue to be enslaved because of their so-called heathen ancestry. Whereas earlier justifications for slavery were primarily religious, the idea that ancestry could be used to determine social status set the stage for the development of the idea of race. In the late seventeenth century, Virginia and Maryland each passed a series of laws that solidified the status of blacks. The strongest indicator of the solidification of the status of Africans was the prohibition of manumission: masters were not allowed to free their slaves, thereby establishing a permanent slave class. Other laws established lifelong servitude, forbade interracial marriage, and limited the rights of blacks to own property and bear arms. These laws specific to blacks both reflected the social order and solidified the status quo. For most of the seventeenth century, European indentured servants and African slaves had shared a similar social status. The slave codes gradually changed this social classification.

slave codes Laws enacted in the 1660s that clearly spelled out the differences between African slaves and European indentured servants.

Laws against Intermarriage

The shared social position of African and European servants and slaves in the early years of the colonies meant that these groups intermarried and fraternized. The fact that Africans and Europeans had amicable relations can be seen in the laws passed that forbade these relationships. In 1661, Virginia passed a law that imposed harsh conditions on English servants who ran away with African slaves. In 1691, Virginia passed another law that prohibited free whites from intermarrying with blacks and Native Americans. Had these groups been naturally disinclined to intermarry or to fraternize, these laws would not have been necessary. As the 1661 law shows, plantation owners were concerned that European indentured servants and African slaves would see that they shared a common interest in fighting for more rights and better conditions. As historian Howard Zinn puts it, “only one fear was greater than the fear of black rebellion in the new American colonies. That was the fear that discontented whites would join black slaves to overthrow the existing order” (2010, 37).

When Africans and Europeans first found themselves together in the Americas, sexual relations and even marriage between these two groups were not uncommon. African men and women married European men and women (Smedley 2007). Various laws were passed, however, both to prevent and to control these relationships. The aforementioned 1662 law made it clear that when African women had children, the child's status as slave or free would be in accordance with the condition of the mother. The law also indicated that when Christians—here meaning Europeans—had sexual relations with Africans, they would pay double the normal fine for adultery. The European men who wrote these laws perceived it to be important to prevent sexual relations between Europeans and Africans and to ensure that the children of enslaved

African women would also be slaves. This law effectively prevented the formation of families by enslaved African women and European men.



▲ In Bacon's Rebellion, white indentured servants joined forces with enslaved Africans to protest their conditions.

Bacon's Rebellion

Bacon's Rebellion, which occurred in September 1676, provides one example of what could happen when blacks and whites joined forces to fight for their interests. The rebellion itself was not particularly successful, but the coalition that emerged between poor whites and African slaves and freedmen became a cause for concern among the elite planter class, who depended on these groups for cheap labor. In Bacon's Rebellion, white indentured servants joined forces with enslaved Africans and freedmen to protest their conditions. This massive rebellion, in which protestors demanding an end to their servitude burned Jamestown to the ground, was a clear threat to the status quo. One of the last groups to surrender was a mixed group of eighty black and twenty white servants. This multiracial coalition indicates that blacks and whites were willing to join forces to fight for their common interests as laborers. After Bacon's Rebellion, an official report arguing for the continued presence of British soldiers in Virginia stated: "Virginia is at present poor and more populous than ever. There is great apprehension

of a rising among the servants, owing to their great necessities and want of clothes; they may plunder the storehouses and ships” (Zinn 2010, 37).

Howard Zinn and other historians argue that Bacon’s Rebellion stirred up fear in the hearts of the elite planter class and that this fear led these elites to pass laws that worked to divide blacks and whites. For example, in the aftermath of the rebellion, the Virginia Assembly gave amnesty to the white servants who had rebelled but not to the blacks. By extending this and other privileges to whites that were denied to blacks, the elites succeeded in preventing future class-based alliances between blacks and whites that would threaten the social order.

Wealth Imbalance and the Tenuous Social Order

Wealth in colonial North America was concentrated in the hands of very few people. In 1700, there were about 250,000 colonists, most of whom lived in horrendous conditions. In Virginia, there were only about fifty wealthy families, who depended on the labor of the other 40,000 poor colonists. This imbalance of wealth made for a tenuous social order (Zinn 2010). It soon became clear to the rich elite and the governing body that they could not continue to disregard the interests of the majority of the population. In 1705, a law was passed requiring masters to provide white servants whose indenture time was completed with ten bushels of corn, thirty shillings, a gun, and fifty acres of land (Morgan 1975, 344). This tactic of giving servants a piece of the American Dream was intended to avoid rebellion by convincing poor whites that the rich landowners were not extortionists or enemies, but protectors of their common interests. To reinforce this impression, it was further mandated that servants had the right to possess property but that slaves did not (Morgan 1975, 333). The Virginia Assembly in 1705 also prohibited any Negro, mulatto, or Indian from raising his hand in opposition to any Christian, which meant any white man (Jordan 1968). By denying black slaves privileges extended to white servants, the first step was taken in creating a division between blacks and whites (Zinn 2010).

In New York in 1708, a group of slaves was accused of murdering a farmer and his family. Shortly afterward, a law was enacted preventing the conspiracy of slaves. This meant, in effect, that slaves could not gather in private to talk about anything. In 1712, a slave rebellion involving about fifty slaves left nine whites dead and six others wounded. Immediately thereafter, New York’s repressive laws were reinforced. For example, arson committed by a slave was made into a crime punishable by death (Szasz 1967).

One purpose of the slave codes was the prevention and deterrence of slave rebellions, which were becoming more and more of a real danger with the

increasing number of slaves, especially in the southern colonies, where slaves often outnumbered whites. In 1730, in Virginia, the governor ordered that all whites should bring their guns with them to church on Sunday so that they would be prepared for a slave uprising in the event that slaves took advantage of their absence to conspire (Jordan 1968). The idea of a slave rebellion was even more distasteful to whites because of the widespread idea that any slave insurrection would have as its ultimate goal not only the emancipation of slaves but also the dominance of blacks over whites (Jordan 1968).

Solidifying the Idea of Race

Eventually, the entire slave class was composed of black Africans, and, as a result of manumission restrictions, most blacks were enslaved. The creation of



From *Bullwhip Days*

My mother's mistress had three boys—one twenty-one, one nineteen, and one seventeen. One day, Old Mistress had gone away to spend the day. Mother always worked in the house; she didn't work on the farm, in Missouri. While she was alone, the boys came in and threw her down on the floor and tied her down so she couldn't struggle, and one after the other used her as long as they wanted, for the whole afternoon. Mother was sick when her mistress came home. When Old Mistress wanted to know what was the matter with her, she told her what the boys had done. She whipped them, and that's the way I came to be here.

—*Mary Peters describing the brutal circumstances of her own conception*

I saw slaves sold. I can see that old block now. My cousin Eliza was a pretty girl, really good-looking. Her master was her father. . . . The day they sold her will always be remembered. They stripped her to be bid off and looked at. . . . The man that bought Eliza was from New York. The Negroes had made up 'nuf money to buy her off theyself, but the white folks wouldn't let that happen. There was a man bidding for her that was a Swedeland. He allus bid for the good-looking cullud gals and bought 'em for his own use. He ask the man from New York "What you gonna do with 'er when you git 'er?" The man from New York said, "None of your damn business, but you ain't got money 'nuf to buy 'er."

—*Former slave Daniel Dowdy*

Source: Mellon 2002, 297; 287.

this sort of color line, alongside the introduction of the concept of hereditary slavery, was an important step toward solidifying the idea of race. Notably, it was not until the eighteenth century that negative beliefs about Africans became widespread among the English settlers. Even then, there is ample evidence that blacks and whites continued to fraternize. In 1743, a grand jury in Charleston, South Carolina, denounced “The Too Common Practice of Criminal Conversation with Negro and other Slave Wenches in this Province” (Zinn 2010).

The stories of Mary Peters and Daniel Dowdy (Voices: From *Bullwhip Days*) elucidate the cruelty and dehumanization that were part and parcel of colonialism and enslavement in the Americas. These two phenomena—colonialism and slavery—have left a strong mark on the way people in the United States view the world. Our contemporary racial worldview is a relic of the systems of human classification that were first used in the context of the colonization of Native American territories and the enslavement of Africans in the Americas. Although such brutal practices are no longer morally or legally permissible, the ideas of racial difference that emerged from those practices persist.

SLAVERY VERSUS THE IDEAL OF FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES

The Declaration of Independence famously begins by stating that all men are created equal. The question was, then, why were some enslaved? Although the concept of liberty was at the core of the American Revolution, nearly half of the fifty-five men who made up the 1787 Constitutional Convention owned slaves, and most of the rest profited from slavery through their business practices. A prominent member, George Washington (1732–1799), was one of the richest men in the colonies and the owner of many slaves. These men struggled with the contradictions inherent in advocating for freedom in a slaveholding society, yet they were unwilling to outlaw slavery (Feagin 2001).

The writers of the founding documents of the United States were not willing to end slavery in part because most of them profited directly or indirectly from it. The wealth generated by slave labor in the United States had made the American Revolution possible: a significant amount of the funds that financed the American Revolution came from profits from slavery (Feagin 2001). The contradiction between the ideals of freedom and the prevalence of slavery led to justifications of slavery in terms of blacks’ alleged racial inferiority. Writings by people such as Thomas Jefferson validated the belief that people of African

descent were less than human. In 1787, Thomas Jefferson wrote in *Notes on Virginia*: “Blacks, whether originally a distinct race or made distinct by time and circumstance, are inferior to whites in the endowment both of body and mind” (Jefferson [1787] 2004, 98–99).

Slavery was an immensely profitable enterprise for a small number of slaveholders. In 1860, the twelve wealthiest counties in the United States could all be found in the Deep South. The profits were not evenly divided, however: about 7 percent of Southerners owned three-quarters of the 4 million slaves in the South. This concentration of wealth meant that slaveowners constituted a powerful planter class that went to great lengths to protect its property, which included humans: slaveowners saw enslaved Africans and African Americans as an investment they did not want to lose. Additionally, many whites who did not own slaves profited indirectly from the slave system. In the southern

GLOBAL VIEW

The Idea of Race in Latin American Nation-Making

Contradictions surrounding racial ideologies are not unique to the United States. During the nineteenth century, Latin American countries sought their independence from colonial rule. As in the United States, such calls for political freedom seemed at odds with these nations’ long histories of slavery and servitude.

From 1870 to 1940, Latin American countries were engaged in nation-making. That is, Latin American intellectual and political elites attempted to build national unity for their fledgling nations (Knight 1990). In this process, they endeavored to prove that their countries were modern nations with a unique identity. They had to contend, however, with European scholars who viewed them as racially degenerate (Stepan 1991). Many European scholars looked down on Latin America, which they perceived as having high levels of racial mixture and a relatively small number of whites.

Latin Americans countered European intellectuals’ impression of them with claims that racial mixture (*mestizaje*) would lead to progress. Latin American intellectuals argued that racial mixture was not only beneficial but also the hallmark of Latin American nations. According to this logic, the mixture of Iberians (those of Spanish or Portuguese descent) with other races was what made countries such as Mexico, Cuba, and Brazil great nations. Although Latin Americans developed their own brand of racial ideology, they did not reject the belief that whiteness was superior. Instead, they expanded the idea of whiteness to include racially and culturally mixed people in order to accommodate their own realities. Faced with different racial demographics, Latin American intellectuals developed racial and national discourses that suited their countries. A consideration of Latin American racial ideologies and discourses reveals that ideas of white superiority come in many forms.

United States, slavery was part of the economic and social fabric of society. There were fewer slaves in the northern states, but many Northerners had strong economic ties to slavery insofar as they consumed and manufactured products made on slave plantations. These strong economic interests in slavery meant that the practice was not ended in the United States until the victory of the North in the Civil War (Wilson 1996; Feagin 2001).

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed the slaves held in the rebel states of the Confederacy. His willingness to issue this proclamation was not hindered by his belief that blacks were inferior to whites. Five years earlier, in 1858, Lincoln had declared: “I am not nor ever have been in favor of the social and political equality of the white and black races: that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters of the free negroes, or jurors, or qualifying them to hold office or having them to marry with white people. . . . I as much as any other man am in favor of the superior position being assigned to the white man” (quoted in Feagin 2001, 83–84).

In 1865, the United States finally abolished slavery. Slavery was one of the main reasons for the long and bloody Civil War that had pitted the North against the South. From the perspective of plantation owners in the South, slavery was a profitable institution that ensured the proper place of blacks in society. From the perspective of capitalists in the North, slavery gave southern capitalists an unfair competitive advantage (Feagin 2001). The end of slavery marked the end of an era of extreme exploitation. The racist ideologies that had justified the enslavement of Africans and the massacre and removal of Native Americans, however, would endure.

THE INDIAN REMOVAL ACT: THE CONTINUATION OF MANIFEST DESTINY

The **Indian Removal Act of 1830** enabled the administration of President Andrew Jackson to use military power to displace at least 70,000 Native Americans, killing tens of thousands in the process. Indian removal is often associated with the Cherokee of Georgia, but there were actually many more “**Trails of Tears**,” including the forced displacement of the Apalachicola of Florida, the Peoria of Illinois, the Shawnee of Ohio, and a host of other tribes (Littlefield and Parins 2011). These removals violated treaties the United States had made with Native Americans, even though the Indian Removal Act contained a clause guaranteeing that “nothing in this act contained shall be construed as authorizing or directing the violation of any existing treaty

Indian Removal Act of 1830 Act that enabled the administration of U.S. President Andrew Jackson to use military power to displace at least 70,000 Native Americans, killing tens of thousands in the process.

Trails of Tears The forced displacement of the Cherokee of Georgia, the Apalachicola of Florida, the Peoria of Illinois, the Shawnee of Ohio, and a host of other tribes.

> Under President Jackson's administration, tens of thousands of Native Americans died as a result of forced displacements known as the Trails of Tears.



between the United States and any of the Indian tribes” (quoted in Cave 2003, 1335). These forced displacements, which continued until 1859, when the Seminoles were removed from Florida, wreaked havoc on indigenous communities (Littlefield and Parins 2011).

During these treacherous journeys, tens of thousands of Native Americans died from disease, cold, starvation, and exhaustion. Approximately 17,000 Cherokee were forcibly removed, and nearly half of those who embarked on the Trail of Tears died in the process. Large numbers of indigenous people died in other removals: about 6,000 of the 40,000 Choctaw did not survive the journey, and only about half of the Creek and the Seminole peoples survived their removals (Churchill 2002).

The justifications for Indian removal were distinct from those used for slavery, as whites tended to see Africans as a vital source of labor. Native Americans, in contrast, were construed as hindering white expansion, and thus the racial ideologies surrounding Native Americans tended to explain and predict their gradual extinction. Notably, this extinction was imagined as occurring through both assimilation (marriage to whites) and natural selection

(death from disease). Whereas colonists' ideas about Africans served to justify their hyperexploitation of slaves, whites' ideas about Native Americans aimed to justify the assimilation and gradual extinction of these groups, enabling whites to appropriate Indian lands (Berger 2009).

THE RISE OF SCIENCE AND THE QUESTION OF HUMAN DIFFERENCE

In the seventeenth century, people in the Americas developed and acted on folk ideas about differences among Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans that were based on daily interactions and the prevailing social order. The slow emergence of the idea of racial difference can be seen in the laws passed and the decisions made by religious leaders. However, the rise of science in the eighteenth century would fundamentally alter this conversation. The question of human difference began to move from the realms of religion and folk ideas to that of science.

European Taxonomies

Before the rise of science, Westerners understood the world primarily in biblical terms. Theology provided explanations for nearly everything. Thus, when Europeans encountered the Americas, they attempted to place these peoples into their understanding of the history of the world, as described in their scriptures. This led to debates over which of the three sons of Noah was the ancestor of the Native Americans and even over whether Native Americans were fully human. The strong belief in the biblical scriptures carried over into scientific thought, which became the central arena for shaping understandings of race (Smedley 2007).

One of the key features of the rise of science was the emergence of taxonomy. Scholars endeavored to classify all flora and fauna known to them. Soon, scientists began to attempt to classify human beings into types. One of the first efforts to develop a classificatory system for humans appeared in a French journal in 1684. The author, François Bernier (1625–1688), divided humans into four groups: Europeans, Far Easterners, Negroes, and Lapps (people from Lapland in northern Scandinavia). His system used physical traits such as skin color and hair texture, which would later become prominent determinants of racial status, to categorize different groups. Other scholars worked on developing classificatory schemes, but it was not until 1735 that we begin to see the development of a comprehensive system of classification that resembles the modern concept of race (Eze 1997).

In 1735, the Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus (1707–1778) proposed that all human beings could be divided into four groups. These four groups are consistent with the modern idea of race in two ways: all of them are still used today, and Linnaeus connected physical traits such as skin color with cultural and moral traits such as “indolence.” Linnaeus described these four groups, which correspond to four of the continents, in *Systemae Naturae* in 1735:

Americanus: reddish, choleric, . . . obstinate, merry, free; . . . regulated by customs.

Asiaticus: sallow, melancholy, . . . black hair, dark eyes, . . . haughty, . . . ruled by opinions.

Africanus: black, phlegmatic, relaxed; women without shame, . . . crafty, indolent, negligent; governed by caprice.

Europaenus: white, sanguine, muscular; inventive; governed by laws.

Other European men elaborated on this schema. For example, Johann Blumenbach (1752–1840), a German professor of medicine, proposed a classificatory system that divided humans into five varieties that also were associated with geographical origins: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay. Both Blumenbach and Linnaeus endowed Europeans—their own group—with the most admirable qualities. It bears repeating that the idea of race is an idea that was initiated by European men and that, not surprisingly, consistently has been used to explain and justify European superiority. The Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711–1776), for example, asserted in 1748 that whites were the only “species” to have created civilized nations and to have developed arts and sciences. European explanations of white racial superiority espoused by Blumenbach, Linnaeus, and Hume soon reached the Americas, where they were used to explain and justify the enslavement of Africans and the continued takeover of indigenous lands (Eze 1997).

Scientific Racism in the Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century was an age of emancipation from slavery and liberation from colonial powers. It also saw the rise of industrial capitalism and the emergence of **scientific racism**—the use of science or pseudoscience to justify or reproduce racial inequality. For intellectuals in the Americas and Europe, scientific racism was central to most human and social inquiries. Eighteenth-century scientists had developed elaborate systems of human classification. In the nineteenth century, scientists built on these classification systems by developing anthropometrics—tools designed to measure the qualities of humans.

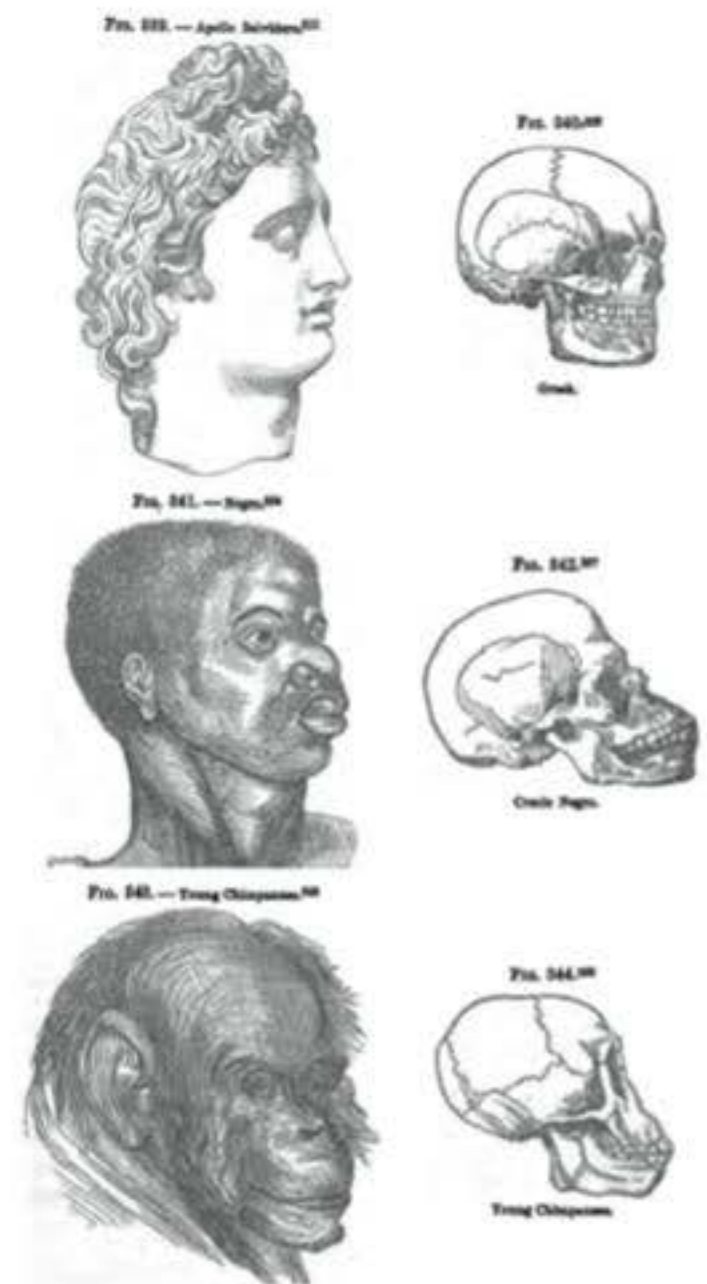
scientific racism

The use of science or pseudoscience to justify or reproduce racial inequality.

With the publication between 1853 and 1855 of Comte Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau's four volumes entitled *Essays on the Inequality of the Human Races*, it is safe to say that by the mid-nineteenth century, the idea of race was fully in place. Gobineau (1816–1882) divided humanity into three races—white, yellow, and black—and argued that racial differences allow us to explain fundamental differences among people. Gobineau's thinking was in line with that of Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), who contended that the superiority of the European race explained its dominant position. He pointed to the natural inferiority of Native Americans as an explanation for their decimation. Spencer's ideas of the “survival of the fittest” would hold great sway for many years to come. Both Spencer and Gobineau used ideas and rudimentary evidence from travel accounts to make their claims. Other scientists, however, were developing anthropometric techniques that enabled them to measure differences between people (Gould 1996).

Samuel George Morton (1799–1851), a scientist and physician who worked in Philadelphia, amassed an impressive collection of human skulls. He began his collection in the 1820s, and by the time of his death in 1851 he had over 1,000 skulls. Morton used these skulls to test his hypothesis that brain size could be used to rank the various human races. In his initial efforts to measure brain size, Morton filled the cranial cavity with mustard seed. Later, when he realized that mustard seed did not provide consistent measurements, he switched to lead shots with a one-eighth-inch diameter that produced less variable results. Using both mustard seeds and lead shots, Morton's measurements consistently showed that Europeans had larger brains than Africans or American Indians. In 1977, evolutionary biologist and scientific historian Stephen Jay Gould reanalyzed Morton's raw data and found several examples of unconscious bias in his work (Gould 1996).

Morton found that American Indians had the smallest skull sizes. Gould explains that Morton arrived at this conclusion because he had included 155 skulls of Peruvian Incas, who had an average brain size of seventy-five cubic inches, yet he only included three skulls of Iroquois people, who had, on average, a much larger skull size. In contrast, in the Caucasian group, Morton eliminated the Hindus, who had the smallest skulls, from his sample.



▲ A racist illustration from Josiah Clark Nott and George Robert Gliddon's *Indigenous Races of the Earth* (1857), showing perceived distinctions between the white man, the black man, and the chimpanzee.

Had Morton ensured equal representation from each of the American Indian and Caucasian groups, he would have found no significant differences in skull size.

Stephen Gould explains that skull size is related to body size, and yet he contends that Morton never took body size into account when he measured skulls. As women tend to be smaller than men, women often have smaller skulls. When Morton compared the brain sizes of Africans and Europeans, his African sample was entirely female and his English sample entirely male. Of course, he found that Europeans had larger brains. What is remarkable about Morton's research is not just that it is full of unconscious bias, but also that his biases are consistently in favor of his expectations. Morton set out to prove, through science, that Europeans were superior. All of his miscalculations turned out in favor of his hypothesis. In this sense, Morton was similar to nearly all of his contemporaries: European and American male scientists of the nineteenth century developed a plethora of methods to measure human abilities and consistently found that white men were superior to all other groups.

Paul Broca (1824–1880), a French anthropologist, built on the work of Samuel Morton to develop more elaborate techniques to measure humans. Broca believed strongly that there was a direct correlation between brain size and intelligence, and he spent much of his career measuring the brains of dead people. Broca eventually ran into trouble with his arguments when he discovered, by measuring the brains of eminent scholars who had passed on, that many people considered to be highly intelligent turned out to have small brains. Broca, however, accounted for those anomalies by asserting that they died very old or that their brains had not been properly preserved. When a study of criminal brains revealed that criminals had abnormally large brains, Broca argued that their sudden death by execution meant that their brains did not atrophy, as did those of people who died of natural causes. Broca eventually went on to measure other characteristics of brains and bodies; however, his scientific measurements always showed what he set out to prove: that Europeans were superior to other groups (Gould 1996).

Ideas of European racial superiority emerged during a time when colonists were advocating radical ideas of freedom for themselves. Justifications for Indian removal often were couched in terms of perceived lack of civilization: Native Americans would not make as good use of the land as whites would and thus did not deserve to live on the land. The supposed natural inferiority of Africans began to be used as a justification for slavery. In the late eighteenth century, Americans such as Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) grappled with a

fundamental contradiction: they were advocating for liberty, justice, and the rights of men at the same time that they depended on African slavery.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The brutal, troubled history of the idea of race clearly demonstrates the power of ideologies about human difference. The idea that the world’s population can be divided into discrete racial groups is a product of a specific series of events: colonialism, slavery, and the rise of science. Because Europeans wished to take land from indigenous peoples in the Americas and to extract labor from Africans, they developed ideologies of inferiority as justification.

Alongside this large-scale theft of land and exploitation of labor, science began to emerge as a field of study concerned largely with the classification of all objects and species into specific groups. Scientists rushed to develop taxonomies of flora and fauna, including classifications of humans. Europeans who proposed these classifications put their own group at the top of the hierarchy.

This subjective (and overt) bias of Europeans continued with the development of anthropometric and other measurement techniques in the nineteenth century. European scientists measured human skulls, brains, and many other parts of the human body and arrived at the same conclusion: Europeans were superior. This recounting of history offers a revealing look at not only the past but also the present. We cannot simply look at the past and point fingers at those “racists” of yesteryear. Instead, we should also be compelled to explore the assumptions and ideologies that govern our behavior today.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

social construction	6	historical construction	7	slave codes	19
race	6	colonialism	7	Indian Removal Act of 1830	25
racism	6	genocide	7	Trails of Tears	25
ethnicity	6	ideology	7	scientific racism	28

1.1 What are race and ethnicity? What is racism? (pp. 6–7)

- *Race* refers to a group of people who share physical and cultural traits as well as a common ancestry. It is a social construction and has no biological basis.
- *Ethnicity* refers to a group identity based on notions of similar and shared history, culture, and kinship.
- *Racism* refers to the belief that some races are superior to others, as well as the practice of subordinating races believed to be inferior.

Review

- » Why do sociologists argue that race is a social and historical construction?

Critical Thinking

- » Why is it important to understand that the idea of race is a modern invention?

1.2 How old is racism? How is race distinct from previous ways of thinking about human difference? (pp. 7–23)

- There are historical precedents to the idea of race, including the Spanish Inquisition and the subjugation of the Irish by the English.
- Slavery existed long before the invention of the idea of race.
- When the Spanish colonists arrived in the Americas, they displayed extreme cruelty to the native people of the Americas.
- African slaves were brought to the Americas to meet labor needs.
- The idea of race emerged to justify slavery and colonization.

Review

- » When was the idea of race invented?

Critical Thinking

- » Can you imagine a world in which racial classifications had no importance? Why or why not?

1.3 How did the writers of the U.S. Constitution think of slavery? (pp. 23–25)

- Although the Declaration of Independence states that “all men are created equal,” nearly half of the authors were slaveowners.
- Slavery was not abolished in the United States until 1865.

Review

- » Why were slavery and freedom in tension during the writing of the Declaration of Independence?

Critical Thinking

- » What are today’s prevailing racial ideologies in the United States?
- » In what ways do those ideologies work to justify the current racial hierarchy?

1.4 How did the Indian Removal Act affect Native Americans? (pp. 25–27)

- The Indian Removal Act of 1830 resulted in the death of tens of thousands of Native Americans due to forced displacements.

Review

- » How were the justifications for Indian Removal distinct from those used for slavery?

Critical Thinking

- » How and why do racial ideologies related to Native Americans and African Americans differ?

1.5 What role did science play in the propagation of racism? (pp. 27–31)

- From simple classification schemes to more complex endeavors, bias has affected scientific attempts to explain differences among racial groups.

Review

- » How did the unconscious bias of nineteenth-century scientists influence their measurements of various racial groups?

Critical Thinking

- » What biases toward race might be present in today's sciences and social sciences?

Talking about Race

Imagine someone said to you that African Americans are naturally gifted at basketball. How could you respond in a constructive way to such a statement? The first step is to ask for further explanation. Listen to any evidence provided to support the claim. You should be able to draw from the knowledge you gained in this chapter to respond to the contention that there are natural or genetic differences between racial groups. Use your sociological imagination to encourage your conversational partner to think of explanations other than genetics for racial differences in basketball skills.



America 1985. Diana Ong. (*Diana Ong/SuperStock*)

2

Race, Immigration, and Citizenship

from the 1840s to the
1920s

As You Read

- 2.1 How did scientific racism evolve over the twentieth century?
- 2.2 How did scientific racism influence immigration and citizenship policies?
- 2.3 How did legal decisions shape racial categories?
- 2.4 Where did European immigrants fit into the racial hierarchy in the United States?
- 2.5 What forms of structural violence did Native Americans and African Americans confront in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

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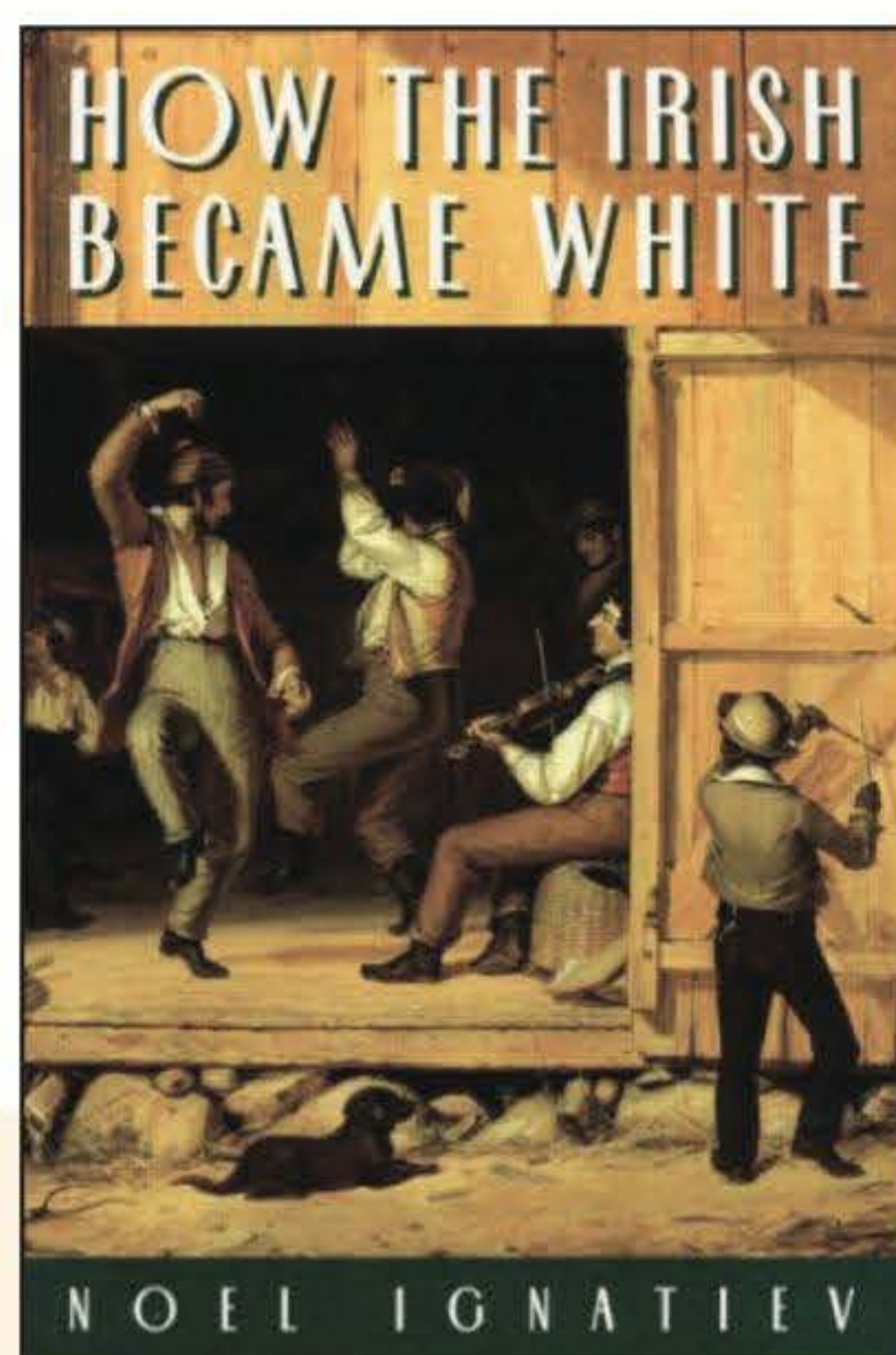
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When the Irish left Ireland for the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they did not think of themselves as whites, or even as Europeans. In the new country, however, they encountered a divide between whites and blacks, and they found it was best to be on the white side of that divide. In this excerpt from *How the Irish Became White*, historian Noel Ignatiev reflects on their experience.

The Irish who emigrated to America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were fleeing caste oppression and a system of landlordism that made the material conditions of the Irish peasant comparable to those of an American slave. They came to a society in which color was important in determining social position. It was not a pattern they were familiar with and they bore no responsibility for it; nevertheless, they adapted to it in short order.

When they first began arriving here in large numbers they were, in the words of Mr. Dooley [a fictional Irish immigrant bartender created by journalist Finley Peter Dunne], given a shovel and told to start digging up the place as if they owned it. On the rail beds and canals they labored for low wages under dangerous conditions; in the South they were occasionally employed where it did not make sense to risk the life of a slave. As they came to the cities, they were crowded into districts that became centers of crime, vice, and disease.

There they commonly found themselves thrown together with free Negroes. Irish-and Afro-Americans fought each other and the police, socialized and occasionally intermarried, and developed a common culture of the lowly. They also both suffered the scorn of those better situated. Along with Jim Crow and Jim Dandy, the drunken, belligerent, and foolish Pat and Bridget were stock characters on the early stage. In antebellum America, it was speculated that if racial amalgamation was ever to take place it would begin between those two groups.

As we know, things turned out otherwise. The outcome was not the inevitable consequence of blind historic forces, still less of biology, but the result of choices made, by the Irish and others, from among available alternatives. To enter the white race was a strategy to secure an advantage in a competitive society.

What did it mean to the Irish to become white in America? It did not mean that they all became rich, or even “middle-class” (however that is defined); to

this day there are plenty of poor Irish. Nor did it mean that they all became the social equals of the Saltonstalls and van Rensselaers; even the marriage of Grace Kelly to the Prince of Monaco and the election of John F. Kennedy as President did not eliminate all barriers to Irish entry into certain exclusive circles. To Irish laborers, to become white meant at first that they could sell themselves piecemeal instead of being sold for life, and later that they could compete for jobs in all spheres instead of being confined to certain work; to Irish entrepreneurs, it meant that they could function outside of a segregated market. To both of these groups it meant that they were citizens of a democratic republic, with the right to elect and be elected, to be tried by a jury of their peers, to live wherever they could afford, and to spend, without racially imposed restrictions, whatever money they managed to acquire. In becoming white the Irish ceased to be Green.

Source: Ignatiev 1995, 2–3.

The idea of race has evolved over time and continues to shape our thinking. It exists because we use and propagate this idea. As discussed in Chapter One, and as we will explore further, race is a historical, social, cultural, and legal construction. Through this exploration, we will begin to see how the racial categories we use today are also contested and in flux.

For race to have meaning, we must constantly give it meaning. Whiteness, together with its associated privileges, is a contested concept; its boundary expands and contracts depending on circumstances. Without the boundary, however, whiteness would be meaningless and would not carry the many social benefits and privileges that it does.

The 1840s through the 1920s is a critical period for analyzing the contested boundary of whiteness. During this time, the United States received millions of immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Mexico. How did these newcomers fit into the racial hierarchy of the United States? And how did the racial policies of this era affect Native Americans and African Americans? This chapter considers the following:

1. How scientific, popular, and legal conceptions of race both worked together and collided at various moments during this period; and
2. How the idea of race continued to develop in the context of European and Asian immigration, the annexation of Mexican territories, the appropriation of Native American lands, and the abolition of slavery in the United States.

THE CONTINUATION OF SCIENTIFIC RACISM

Today, most scientists reject the idea that the world can be divided into racial groups with measurable moral and intellectual differences. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, most scientists and the vast majority of whites concurred that races existed biologically and that whites were the superior racial group. Popular and legal debates over who was and was not white often relied on the purported scientific findings of the time. We will begin our discussion by examining the applications of scientific racism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Measuring Brain Size

When nineteenth-century scientists compared the skulls of blacks to those of whites, they set out to use science to prove what they thought they already knew: that the white race was superior to all others. Nineteenth-century craniometry—the measurement of cranial capacity—provided the first opportunity for scientists to bring massive amounts of data to bear on their ideas of human hierarchy. As discussed in the previous chapter, these data on brain size supposedly provided “scientific” proof of white superiority. Eventually, however, craniometry lost its appeal, and scientists looked for new ways to measure human difference and prove European supremacy. These new methods revolved around measuring intelligence directly (Gould 1996).

Intelligence Testing

In the United States, **intelligence testing**—the attempt to quantify intellectual ability using scientific measures—became popular in the early twentieth century. Such tests were used in attempts to demonstrate the alleged superiority of not only Europeans as a whole but also particular groups of Europeans. When the United States began to receive large numbers of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, American scientists used intelligence testing to draw distinctions among them (Gould 1996; Brodtkin 1998).

Intelligence tests were not originally designed to find out which races were the most intellectually fit. Instead, the goal was to identify children who needed extra help in school. Alfred Binet (1857–1911), director of the psychology laboratory at the Sorbonne in Paris, dedicated much of his scholarly career to developing ways to measure children’s intellectual ability. It was only when Binet’s test was taken to the United States that it began to be used to determine which groups were innately superior or inferior.

One of the first psychologists to use Binet’s test was H. H. Goddard (1866–1957), who adapted it for use in the Vineland Training School for

intelligence testing

The attempt to quantify intellectual ability using scientific measures.

Feeble-Minded Boys and Girls. Goddard firmly believed that feeble-mindedness was inherited, attributing intelligence to a single gene. To provide evidence for his beliefs, Goddard took Binet's test to Ellis Island, where he administered the exam to arriving immigrants who spoke little English. Many received a low score, but instead of questioning the conditions under which he performed the exam, Goddard concluded that immigrants were of low intelligence. He further argued that, given these results, immigration had to be curtailed. Later in his career, Goddard conceded that perhaps what he defined as feeble-mindedness could be cured through education (Gould 1996).

The next prominent psychologist to use intelligence testing was Lewis Terman (1877–1956), a professor of psychology at Stanford University. Terman modified the Binet test, endeavoring to standardize it such that the average person would score 100. This number should sound familiar, as it is still used today as the mean for IQ—the intelligence quotient—in what's known as the Stanford-Binet test. Terman's colleague R. M. Yerkes (1876–1956) carried on Terman's work and developed the Army Mental Tests, which aimed to measure innate intelligence. Yerkes succeeded in convincing the U.S. Army to allow him to administer the tests to all of its recruits. This massive sample of over a million respondents gave significant quantitative weight to the emerging field of intelligence testing (Gould 1996).

Stephen Gould, whose work we discussed in Chapter One, argues that the primary error in intelligence testing is that of reification—making intelligence into a scientific concept by measuring it. Some people know more facts and trivia, are more quick-witted, can calculate sums in their heads faster, and are more eloquent in speech and writing than others. But as Gould contends, intelligence tests are flawed because they can not truly measure this wide range of abilities. Moreover, instead of promoting the idea that each of these skills can be learned and nurtured, intelligence testing implies that they are innate (Gould 1996).



▲ Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island were subjected to not only invasive medical inspections but also intelligence testing.

eugenics The practice of controlled breeding to increase the occurrence of desirable characteristics in a population.

Eugenics

Faulty thinking about intelligence developed into ugly manifestations. In the United States, about 60,000 people who were deemed less intelligent were forcibly sterilized in the early twentieth century (Jacobson 1998). The **eugenics** movement, which had its heyday from about 1900 to 1930, aimed to improve the population through controlled breeding. Eugenicists believed that not only intelligence but also alcoholism, laziness, crime, poverty, and other moral and cultural traits could be inherited. Based on this notion, they advocated sterilizing the biologically unfit as a way of creating a superior breed of people. During this period, many Americans believed the country's population was in decline because of immigration and the high fertility of poor people (Lindsay 1998).

One of the main proponents of eugenics was Madison Grant (1865–1937), a lawyer, historian, and physical anthropologist. In much of his work, including the 1916 book *The Passing of the Great Race*, Grant put forward the idea that Europe could be divided into three races: “Nordics,” “Alpines,” and “Mediterraneans.” He forcefully argued that Nordics were the most fit of the three and that measures should be taken to ensure their racial purity and survival. His ideas made it into the mainstream both through his book and through his position as chairman of the U.S. Committee on Selective Immigration. In that capacity, he advocated for a reduction in the numbers of Alpines and Mediterraneans admitted into the United States. The views of Madison Grant and other eugenicists played an important role in the development of immigration policy in the 1920s, placing limits on the immigration of “undesirable” groups (Jacobson 1998).

Madison Grant's ideas that Nordics were the “master race” and that it was incumbent upon the state to ban interracial marriages and sterilize inferior races found a large audience in Germany. Adolf Hitler referred to Grant's book *The Passing of the Great Race* as his “bible,” and the German translation became widely read in the 1930s (Spiro 2008). Hitler put Grant's ideas into practice when he passed the Eugenic Sterilization Law in 1933, which led to the sterilization of 225,000 people in Germany in just three years. Similar to sterilization laws in the United States, this law was intended to improve the population. The Nazis then took these ideas several steps further, first to euthanasia and then to the gas chambers (Smedley 2007).

Nazi extremism caused white Americans as well as many Europeans to question the implications of white supremacist thinking. The experience of World War II led, in 1948, to the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which asserts that all humans possess inherent dignity and

Carrie Buck

Carrie Buck (1906–1983) was separated from her mother, Emma, as a young child and was placed in a foster home, where she worked as a domestic servant for most of her childhood. When Carrie was a teenager, her foster parents’ nephew raped her. As a result of the rape, Carrie became pregnant. After she gave birth at age seventeen to a girl, Vivian, her foster parents placed Carrie in the Virginia State Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-minded, most likely in an attempt to avoid public shaming of their family. Carrie Buck’s mother had previously been placed in this same facility on the grounds of her alleged feeble-mindedness and promiscuity. The colony ordered Carrie sterilized, and although the sterilization was challenged in court in 1925, the ruling was upheld. At the age of twenty-one in 1927, Carrie was sterilized under the authority of the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, part of the state of Virginia’s eugenics program. Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes declared that “three generations of imbeciles are enough,” referring to the alleged feeble-mindedness of Carrie, her mother, and her six-month-old daughter. Following her sterilization, Carrie Buck was released into the community as a domestic servant.



Carrie and Emma Buck. Carrie was sterilized under Virginia’s eugenics program.

Voices.

equality. This declaration in turn influenced the beginnings of the civil rights movement in the United States.

Yet ideas of innate inferiority and superiority have not disappeared. In 1994, psychologist Richard Herrnstein and political scientist Charles Murray published a book titled *The Bell Curve*, which perpetuated the theory that intelligence is hereditary. Despite virulent criticism from academics, the book received a great deal of publicity. Ten years later, in 2004, Frank Miele, senior editor of *Skeptic*, and Vincent Sarich, professor emeritus of anthropology at

Berkeley, argued in their book *Race: The Reality of Human Differences* that races are a biological reality. In addition, they contended that there are real, measurable intellectual differences between racial groups. Esteemed race scholars such as Jonathan Marks have repeatedly pointed out the absurdity of such findings, arguing that Sarich and Miele’s book is “scientifically idiosyncratic and politically reactionary” (Marks 2004, 43).

In 2009, a Harvard PhD candidate named Jason Richwine defended a dissertation in which he argued that Latino immigrants have a substantially lower IQ than the white native-born population of the United States. He further argued that, because of the supposed hereditary nature of IQ, Latino immigration should be limited. According to the leading scholarship on race, however, there is no genetic basis for racial differences (Roberts 2012; Smedley 2007). Latinos are people with roots in Latin America who live in the United States and whose ancestry could include people from any continent. It is thus illogical to argue that they share a genetic ancestry.

pseudoscience Beliefs or practices appearing to be scientific but not based on the scientific method.

Sociologists identify such arguments as examples of **pseudoscience**—beliefs or practices appearing to be scientific but not based on the scientific method. Similar to nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century eugenicists, the authors of the works mentioned earlier mistakenly find that their own group—those of European descent—is intellectually superior to others. While scholars have identified these works as pseudoscientific, attention from popular media outlets can perpetuate the myths and falsehoods they contain.

EXCLUSIONARY IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP POLICIES

Intense debates on immigration and citizenship in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries drew on the discourses of scientific racism. From its inception, immigration policy in the United States has been racially

Race-Related U.S. Immigration Laws and Supreme Court Rulings, 1790–1924

1790	1857	1866	1868	1882	1887
Naturalization law grants citizenship to whites born in the United States	<i>Dred Scott v. Sandford</i> rules that free blacks are not U.S. citizens	Civil Rights Act extends birth-right citizenship to blacks	Fourteenth Amendment constitutionalizes the Civil Rights Act of 1866	Chinese Exclusion Act prohibits Chinese laborers from entering the United States	Dawes Act forces Native Americans to give up communal ownership of land

motivated. The first major piece of immigration legislation, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, set the course for biased immigration policy in the twentieth century (Lee 2002).

The Chinese Exclusion Act

The **Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)** was overtly racist in that it targeted one specific group on the basis of race and class: Chinese laborers. It was renewed in 1892, made permanent in 1902, and not repealed until 1943. The act specifically prohibited Chinese laborers from entering the United States while allowing Chinese merchants and teachers to enter. According to the 1890 census, there were 102,620 Chinese men and 3,868 Chinese women present in the country, mostly in California. At the time, most Chinese immigrants were laborers; they were integral to the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad. By 1882, the federal government had succumbed to pressure from white laborers to exclude Chinese immigrants, and Congress issued this first racially exclusive immigration law.

Subsequently, the **Immigration Act of 1917** expanded the Chinese Exclusion Act to deny entry to anyone coming from the “Asiatic Barred Zone,” which included India, Burma, the Malay States, Arabia, and Afghanistan (Calavita 2000; Lee 2002). Between 1917 and 1952, the United States placed strict immigration limits on people from Asia while welcoming those from preferred European countries. The intent behind these laws was to improve the racial composition of the United States.

The Chinese Exclusion Act compelled the federal government to put into place the bureaucratic machinery needed to patrol the borders of the country. As the act excluded specific groups of people from entering the United States, it required that the government establish immigration controls and checks. The act required the creation of an immigration inspection force, one that eventually would evolve into the Border Patrol. It further required the creation of certificates of residence—the

Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) Legislation that denied Chinese laborers entry to the United States.

Immigration Act of 1917 Legislation expanding the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and denying entry to the United States for anyone coming from the “Asiatic Barred Zone,” which included India, Burma, the Malay States, Arabia, and Afghanistan.

1898	1917	1922	1923	1924
Supreme Court grants citizenship to Asians born in the United States	Immigration Act creates the “Asiatic Barred Zone”	<i>Takao Ozawa v. United States</i> rules that whiteness is defined by Caucasian ancestry	<i>United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind</i> rules that whiteness is not defined by Caucasian ancestry	Johnson-Reed Act establishes national-origin quotas

research focus

Chinese Exclusion and Gatekeeping Ideology

Historian Erika Lee (2002) argues that the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act helped shape the racialized nature of subsequent U.S. immigration policies. The act made the United States what she calls a “gatekeeping” nation—one that first racialized Chinese immigrants and then others as a permanently alien and inferior class that should be excluded. Specifically, she contends that

Chinese exclusion introduced a “gatekeeping” ideology, politics, law, and culture that transformed the ways in which Americans viewed and thought about race, immigration, and the United States’ identity as a nation of immigration. It legalized and reinforced the need to restrict, exclude, and deport “undesirable” and excludable immigrants. (Lee 2002, 37)

Subsequent to the passage of Chinese exclusion, *nativists*—people who presume the superiority of native-born citizens—directed their ire at other groups, often using the same narratives and discourses used to exclude the Chinese. These nativists were successful in lobbying for more exclusion laws, including the Immigration Acts of 1917 and 1924, which drastically restricted immigration from southern and eastern Europe. This ideology continues into the present day, as current immigration laws prioritize certain immigrants over others.

Once the United States passed selective immigration policies, it became necessary to build a state apparatus and bureaucracy to enforce these laws. The 1892 Geary Act and the 1893 McCreary Amendment required Chinese laborers to register with the federal government and obtain certificates of residence. By 1928, all immigrants were required to secure “immigrant identification cards,” precursors to today’s “green cards.”

Based on her analysis of the Chinese Exclusion Act and related legislation, Lee contends that gatekeeping ideology “was instrumental in the formation of the nation itself and in articulating a definition of American national identity and belonging” (2002, 41). The legislation thus transformed the United States from a nation of immigrants to one that guarded its gates against foreigners it deemed undesirable.

For Discussion

1. What is the relationship between anti-Chinese sentiment and nativism toward other immigrant groups?
2. What does Lee mean by “gatekeeping”?

Source: Lee 2002.

precursors to today’s “green cards”—for Chinese individuals who were permitted to remain in the United States. It was not until 1928 that other immigrants had to carry proof of legal presence. In 1940, these cards were replaced by “alien registration cards,” which continue to be used today (Lee 2002).

The Johnson-Reed Act (Immigration Act of 1924)

The next major piece of immigration legislation, the **Johnson-Reed Act** (or **Immigration Act of 1924**), was also overtly racist in that it was designed to increase the Nordic population in the United States and halt the growth of other groups. The act made passports and visas a requirement for entry to the United States and established national-origin quotas for European immigrants. These quotas dictated the number of immigrants who could enter the United States in any given year. Calculated on the basis of the U.S. population’s composition in 1890, the quotas were applicable only to the European population. Specifically, the law stipulated that the quotas not take into account the following four groups: (1) immigrants from the Western Hemisphere, (2) aliens ineligible for citizenship (i.e., Asians), (3) the descendants of slaves, and (4) Native Americans. By basing national-origin quotas exclusively on the European population at the time, the law made it clear that Africans, Asians, and Native Americans were not considered to be part of the nation (Ngai 2004). It is also remarkable to look back on this legislation from today’s perspective: no restrictions were placed on Mexican immigration.

The Johnson-Reed Act ignored the presence of Asians and Africans in the United States and set a quota of one hundred immigrants per year for immigrants from China, Japan, India, Ethiopia,

Johnson-Reed Act (Immigration Act of 1924) Legislation that made passports and visas a requirement for entry to the United States and established national-origin quotas for European immigrants.



▲ The cover of an 1878 fictional story about the supposed economic and moral threats posed by large-scale Chinese immigration.

Liberia, and South Africa. These restrictionist policies remained in place until after World War II. In 1943, Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act, and in 1946, it extended the right of citizenship to other Asians (Reimers 1981; Ngai 2004). The quotas were revised in the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and then completely revamped in 1965.

Intelligence test proponents and eugenicists influenced the debates surrounding the Johnson-Reed Act. The most radical eugenicists advocated sterilization of people deemed to be inferior. Eugenicists were invited to testify before Congress during these debates, and in their testimonies they made it clear that they believed that Northern Europeans were superior to people from southern and eastern Europe. Harry H. Laughlin, director of the Eugenics Institute, for example, pointed to the Army Mental Tests carried out by Robert Yerkes as evidence of the inferiority of Poles, Italians, Russians, and blacks.

Members of Congress took the ideas of eugenicists into account when they voted to restrict the immigration of people they deemed undesirable immigrants and to promote the immigration of those whom they expected might improve the American stock. The quotas that took effect in 1929 reflect these preferences: Great Britain and Northern Ireland were granted a quota of 65,271 immigrants; Italy, 5,802; Yugoslavia, 845; and most African and Asian countries, 100 (Ngai 2004). Immigration restrictions reflected a clear racial bias in determining who could enter the country. Citizenship restrictions, which we consider next, demonstrated racial biases regarding who could become a full member of society.

Naturalization Law of 1790 The first piece of U.S. legislation on citizenship, stating that only “free white persons” who had lived in the United States for at least two years were eligible.

birthright citizenship Also known as *jus soli*, the concept that citizenship is determined by where one is born, not by the nationality, race, or citizenship of one’s parents.

naturalization The process whereby people become citizens of a country where they were not born.

Birthright Citizenship and Naturalization for Whites Only

One of the first laws passed in the newly formed United States was the **Naturalization Law of 1790**, which granted citizenship to whites born in the United States and limited naturalization to immigrants who were “free white persons.” Whereas **birthright citizenship** refers to gaining citizenship in the country of one’s birth, **naturalization** describes the process whereby people become citizens of a country where they were not born.

Since the inception of the United States, birthright citizenship (also known as *jus soli*) has prevailed as the law of the land, albeit with racial restrictions. Birthright citizenship conveys the idea that citizenship is determined by where one is born, not by the nationality, race, or citizenship of one’s parents. This concept was part of English common law, on which much of U.S. law is based. The 1790 law was explicitly restricted to whites: it was not until

the Civil Rights Act of 1866 that native-born blacks were granted citizenship. In 1868, this act was incorporated into the Constitution in the form of the Fourteenth Amendment, which reads: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States, and of the state wherein they reside.”

The Fourteenth Amendment granted birthright citizenship to most blacks and whites born in the United States—but only to blacks and whites. Native Americans were not officially granted birthright citizenship until 1924. And it was not until the Nationality Act of 1940 that birthright citizenship became a reality for all people born in the United States (Haney-Lopez 2006).

It was not until 1952 that immigrants of races other than black or white could become U.S. citizens. Throughout the twentieth century, immigrants from China, Japan, Syria, and India applied for citizenship via naturalization and were denied on the basis that they were not white (Haney-Lopez 2006).

DEFINING WHITENESS IN COURT

Between 1878 and 1952, U.S. courts considered fifty-one cases in which a non-citizen contested his denial of citizenship on the basis of his race. In all but one case, the noncitizen claimed that he was in fact white and therefore should be granted citizenship. These petitioners were Native American, Chinese, Hawaiian, Burmese, Japanese, Indian, Syrian, Armenian, Filipino, Korean, Arabian, Mexican, and mixed race. The courts were not consistent in their determinations: one court declared Syrians to be not white, whereas an appeal court ruled that they were. Most of the claims to whiteness were denied, with the exception of those made by Mexicans (1897), Armenians (1909 and 1925), and Syrians (1910 and 1915) (Haney-Lopez 2006).

It was not predetermined which groups would be granted whiteness in the United States. Instead, court decisions played a role in assigning a racial category to each national-origin group in the United States. The assignment of whiteness to Armenians and Italians and nonwhiteness to Japanese, for example, would have enduring effects on their social location in the United States. Pronouncing the Armenians as white

allowed them a prosperous and privileged position in American society. This prosperity then confirmed the common knowledge of their Whiteness, which in turn served to justify the judicial treatment of Armenians as White persons. The opposite occurred with the Japanese. Again, their position in the

U.S. racial schema was initially far from certain: some had been naturalized as “white persons,” but others had been excluded from citizenship. Partly under court authority, however, the non-Whiteness of Japanese immigrants emerged as common knowledge.

(Haney-Lopez 2006, 93)

Prominent court cases denied Japanese and Asian Indians citizenship and, in many cases, stripped them of their land. Japanese and Indian groups would have to wait several decades before being granted all the rights associated with citizenship (Ngai 2004).

Legal scholar Ian Haney-Lopez (2006) argues that social ideas about whiteness influenced both scientific endeavors and legal decisions. In cases of granting or denying citizenship based on race, judges cited both scientific studies and what they called “common knowledge” in their decisions. Haney-Lopez contends that in determining whiteness, judges’ decisions reflected their own unconscious bias and effort to maintain the privileges associated with being white. The fact that whiteness could be contested in court shows that it is not a fixed category; it exists only by virtue of defining some people as nonwhite.

Two of the prerequisite cases that reached the Supreme Court were *Takao Ozawa v. United States* and *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind*. These two cases stand in stark opposition to each other and make it clear that in a court of law, whiteness is what the judges say it is; that is, whiteness is a legal construct. In *Ozawa*, the court determined that despite Japanese-born Takao Ozawa’s white skin, he was not white because he was not Caucasian. In *Thind*, argued just months later, the Court determined that even though Asian Indians such as Bhagat Singh Thind were Caucasian, they were not white.



▲ Takao Ozawa. In *Takao Ozawa v. United States* (1922), the Court ruled that whiteness is defined by Caucasian ancestry.

Takao Ozawa v. United States (1922)

Takao Ozawa was born in Japan in 1875. At the age of nineteen, he moved to California and studied at the University of California at Berkeley. He met and married another Japanese national living in the United States, and they had children together. In 1914, when he was thirty-nine years old, Ozawa applied for citizenship in Hawaii, where he was living at the time. The U.S. district attorney of Hawaii denied his application for citizenship, stating that because he was not white, he was ineligible for naturalization. Ozawa appealed this decision, and after many years, his case made it all the way to the Supreme Court. One of Ozawa’s major arguments was that his skin color was as light

as that of many whites. Of course, this was also true for many people legally defined as black. The Supreme Court denied his petition on the basis that he was not white, even though his skin color was lighter than that of some people considered to be white. The ruling classified him as not white on the grounds that “white” meant “Caucasian,” and ethnologists had determined that he was not Caucasian (Haney-Lopez 2006).

United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind (1923)

Just three months after the *Ozawa* decision, the Supreme Court reviewed the petition of Bhagat Singh Thind, who arrived in the United States at the age of twenty-one in 1913. In 1920, Thind applied for naturalization on the basis that, as a high-caste Hindu, he was in fact Caucasian and therefore white. The district court granted his petition for naturalization. However, the federal government appealed that decision, and Thind’s case also went to the Supreme Court. Thind’s case was heard less than two months after the *Ozawa* decision, on January 11, 1923. The Supreme Court did not dispute Thind’s argument that, as an Asian Indian, he was “Caucasian,” per the latest scientific evidence. The court wrote, “It may be true that the blond Scandinavian and the brown Hindu have a common ancestor in the dim reaches of antiquity, but the average man knows perfectly well that there are unmistakable and profound differences between them today” (quoted in Haney-Lopez 2006, 63). To follow up on this idea, the Court’s final ruling stated, “What we now hold is that the words ‘free white person’ are words of common speech, to be interpreted in accordance of the common man, synonymous with the word ‘Caucasian’ only as that word is popularly understood” (quoted in Haney-Lopez 2006, 64).

The relationship between common knowledge and law is circular. When judges decided who was legally white, they were subject to the unconscious biases inherent in what is considered common knowledge. At the same time, their decisions reinforced common beliefs about who was white and who was not. Similar processes occurred with identification of the Irish, Italians, and Jews, people who today are nearly universally accepted as white.

HOW THE IRISH, ITALIANS, AND JEWS BECAME WHITE

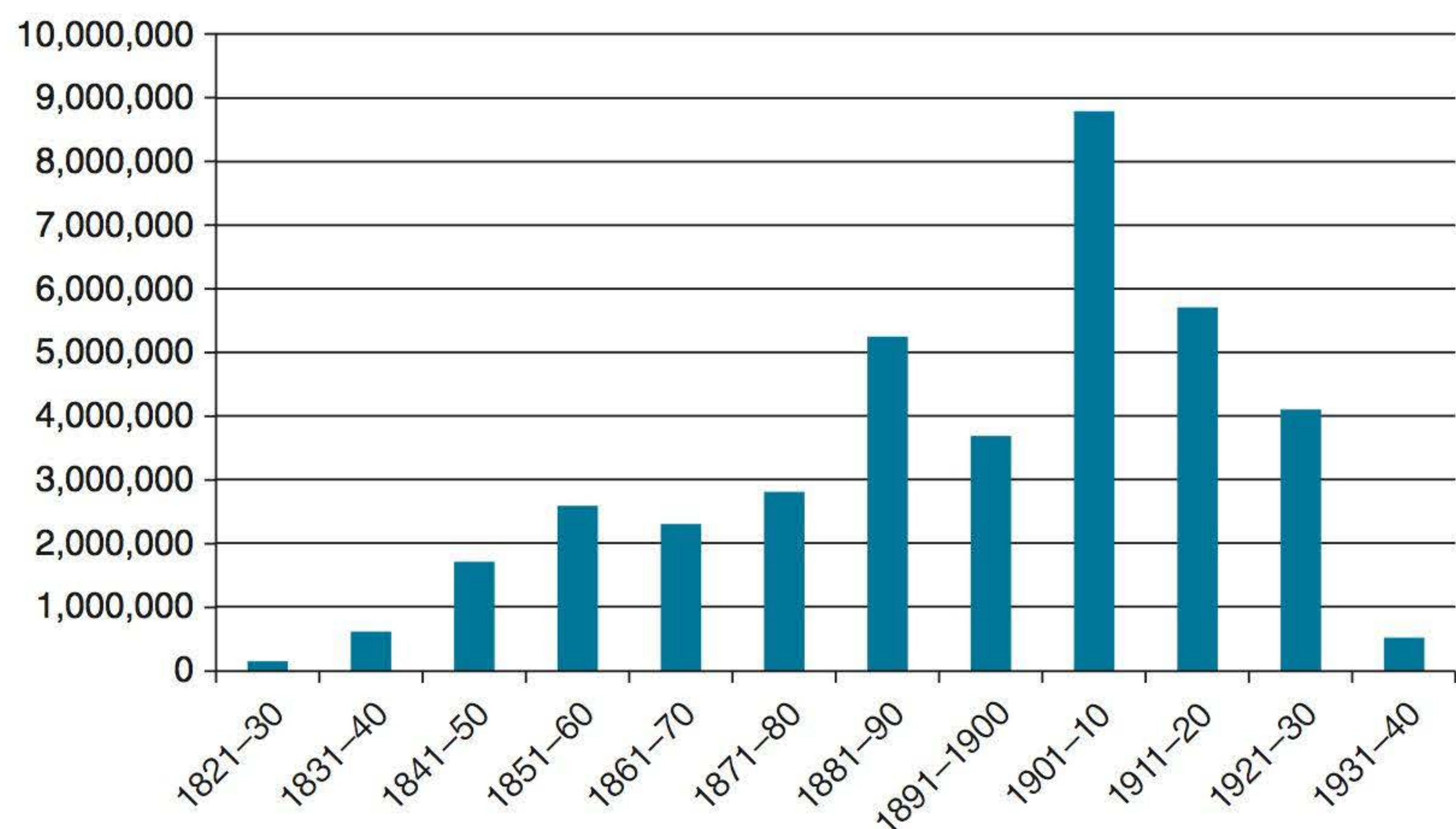
As we saw in the chapter-opening passage, the millions of Irish who came to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century did not think of themselves



▲ Bhagat Singh Thind, denied citizenship because he was not considered white despite his Caucasian ancestry.

FIGURE 2-1.
Immigration to the United States, 1820–1940

Source: Office of Immigration Statistics, Department of Homeland Security.



as “white” when they lived in Ireland. In a context in which everyone is Irish, whiteness has little meaning. However, both the government’s decision to permit the Irish to come to the United States in large numbers and their eventual incorporation into the United States were closely related to their perceived whiteness. How did this perception of the Irish as white come about? The process through which Irish and other Europeans acquired the status of unequivocal whiteness was not as straightforward as one might think.

Relatively few immigrants arrived in the United States between 1790 and the 1830s. By the 1840s, however, hundreds of thousands of immigrants began to arrive, primarily from Ireland and Germany (Figure 2-1). Between 1846 and 1855, over 3 million immigrants came to the United States, including 1,288,307 from Ireland and 975,311 from Germany, most of whom were fleeing deprivation in their home countries. Irish immigration to the United States reached a high point in 1851, at 221,253 for the year. The highest number of German immigrants in one year was recorded in 1882, when 250,630 Germans arrived in the United States. Once German and Irish immigration began to taper off, Italians and Russians (mostly Jews) began to immigrate in large numbers. Italian immigration peaked in 1907, with 258,731 immigrants, and Russian immigration peaked in the same year, with 258,943 immigrants arriving in the United States.

As each of these groups integrated into the United States, they experienced both assimilation, through which Irish, Italians, and Germans became Americans, and racialization, through which Celts, Hebrews, and Mediterraneans

became white (Jacobson 1998). **Assimilation** is a process whereby immigrants lose their ethnic distinctiveness and become part of the mainstream—for example, when an Italian American becomes simply an American. **Racialization** is a process whereby people come to be recognized as part of a racial group, such as when a Mediterranean becomes white (as defined by him- or herself and others).

The Irish

Ireland has a long history of oppression of Irish Catholics by English Protestants. In the eighteenth century, Ireland was governed by the Penal Codes, which denied many rights and privileges to Catholics, including the rights to vote, to attend university, and to own horses worth more than five pounds. Catholics in Ireland were known as Celts or Gaels, and most lived in poverty. Neither Catholics nor Protestants felt united as members of a white race. It was not until Catholics and Protestants immigrated to the United States and saw that whiteness was associated with free wage labor and blackness with slavery that whiteness assumed any real meaning for them. They further learned that blackness was devalued and that whites were entitled to privileges denied to blacks, similar to the privileges denied to Catholics in Ireland (Ignatiev 1995).

When the Irish arrived in the United States, they found a situation in which blacks occupied the lowest rungs of the paid labor force. The Irish joined black Americans in these occupations—as coal heavers, cooks, stewards, millworkers, servants, and waiters—and began to form unions to fight for better wages and working conditions. Because of the prevailing racial hierarchy in the United States, these unions were able to exclude black workers from membership. As such, between 1830 and 1870, the Irish slowly replaced black Americans as workers in these industries. Black workers soon found themselves confined to the occupations of ragpickers, shoe-shiners, chimney sweeps, and itinerant laborers. Over the course of a few decades, Irish immigrants were able to capitalize on their newly found whiteness and control several niches as longshoremen, waiters, millworkers, and factory employees. Insofar as the Irish were able to secure their position in the United States by excluding blacks, many scholars argue that the Irish became white through this process (Ignatiev 1995).

The Italians

As the Irish were establishing their whiteness in relation to blacks in the United States, Italians were just beginning to arrive. Similar to the Irish, the Italians

assimilation A process whereby immigrants lose their ethnic distinctiveness and become part of the mainstream.

racialization A process whereby people come to be recognized as part of a racial group.

> Italian American family sewing garments in their tenement in New York City, 1913.



had no reason to think of themselves as “white” prior to their arrival in the United States. Upon migrating to the United States, Italians often faced discrimination because of both their Catholicism and stereotypes related to their alleged criminality, and they were even lynched on occasion in the U.S. South.

One notable case occurred in 1891 in New Orleans, when eleven Italians were accused of murder and conspiracy following the death of Police Chief David Hennessy. Although acquitted in a jury trial amidst accusations of bribery and corruption, they continued to be held in the jailhouse. A mob of angry townspeople, infuriated by the acquittal and charges of corruption, descended on the jailhouse and lynched the Italian prisoners. In the aftermath of the raid, a local judge, R. H. Marr, pointed out that the community’s rage was in part because the victim was a non-Italian: “Until the killing of Hennessy,” said Marr, “these people had so far as the public knew, confined their operation to their own race” (quoted in Jacobson 1998, 58). Such references to an Italian “race” were common during this time.

Italians who arrived in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were legally white. At the same time, Italians were often juxtaposed to “Anglo-Saxons” or to members of the “Nordic” race. Matthew Jacobson argues that during this period, one could be both “white *and* racially distinct from other whites” (1998, 6). This is the same contradiction we saw

when examining the Irish. These immigrants were legally entitled to whiteness but were not able to attain all the privileges associated with being white. It was only after the passage of legislation that cut off most immigration from eastern and southern Europe that Italians came to be seen as only culturally, not racially, different from other whites. We see a similar pattern with Jews—mostly those of eastern European descent—who gradually gained acceptance as members of the “white race.”

The Jews

In the early twentieth century, Jewish immigrants from Germany and eastern Europe were concentrated in New York City, where many worked in the garment industry. They encountered numerous forms of **anti-Semitism**, a term that refers to discrimination, hostility, or prejudice against Jews. Just as trade unions organized by the Irish excluded blacks from wage labor in many large cities, the acceptance of anti-Semitism enabled craft unions to exclude Jews from better-paying occupations. As a result, even Jews who were skilled hat-makers, watchmakers, and tailors had no choice but to work as unskilled laborers. Not only were Jews relegated to these low-paying jobs, they often had no choice but to live in cramped housing in slum areas known as ghettos. Further, elite universities routinely barred them from admission. This labor, housing, and educational discrimination has led some scholars to contend that Jews were not viewed as white in this period (Brodkin 1998).

The lynching of Leo Frank, a Jewish man, is one case supporting this argument. In April 1913, Mary Phagan, a fourteen-year-old white girl, was found dead in the basement of the pencil factory that Frank owned. After a long trial, Frank was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death, but owing to the nature of the evidence, the governor commuted his sentence to life in prison. In response, a white mob rampaged the prison and dragged Frank to the outskirts of Atlanta, where they lynched him for the alleged murder and rape of Phagan. Remarkably, Frank’s conviction rested largely on the testimony of Jim Conley, a black janitor at the factory. The fact that Frank was hanged from a tree in a way similar to how African Americans were lynched caused many to ask whether Jews were white. The lynching, combined with the fact that a black man’s testimony formed the basis of the case, indicated that Frank did not benefit from the privileges associated with whiteness in the early twentieth century (Jacobson 1998).

In the aftermath of World War II, as Americans reckoned with the horrors of Nazism and subsequently repudiated the eugenics movement, anti-Semitism lost much of its hold. Whereas Jewish people who grew up in the 1920s and

anti-Semitism

Discrimination, hostility, or prejudice against Jews.

structural violence

Institutional harm or disadvantage inflicted on individuals or social groups.

1930s faced virulent anti-Semitism, it had diminished by the 1950s. Accordingly, whiteness expanded to include Jewish people (Brodkin 1998).

STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AGAINST NATIVE AMERICANS AND AFRICAN AMERICANS

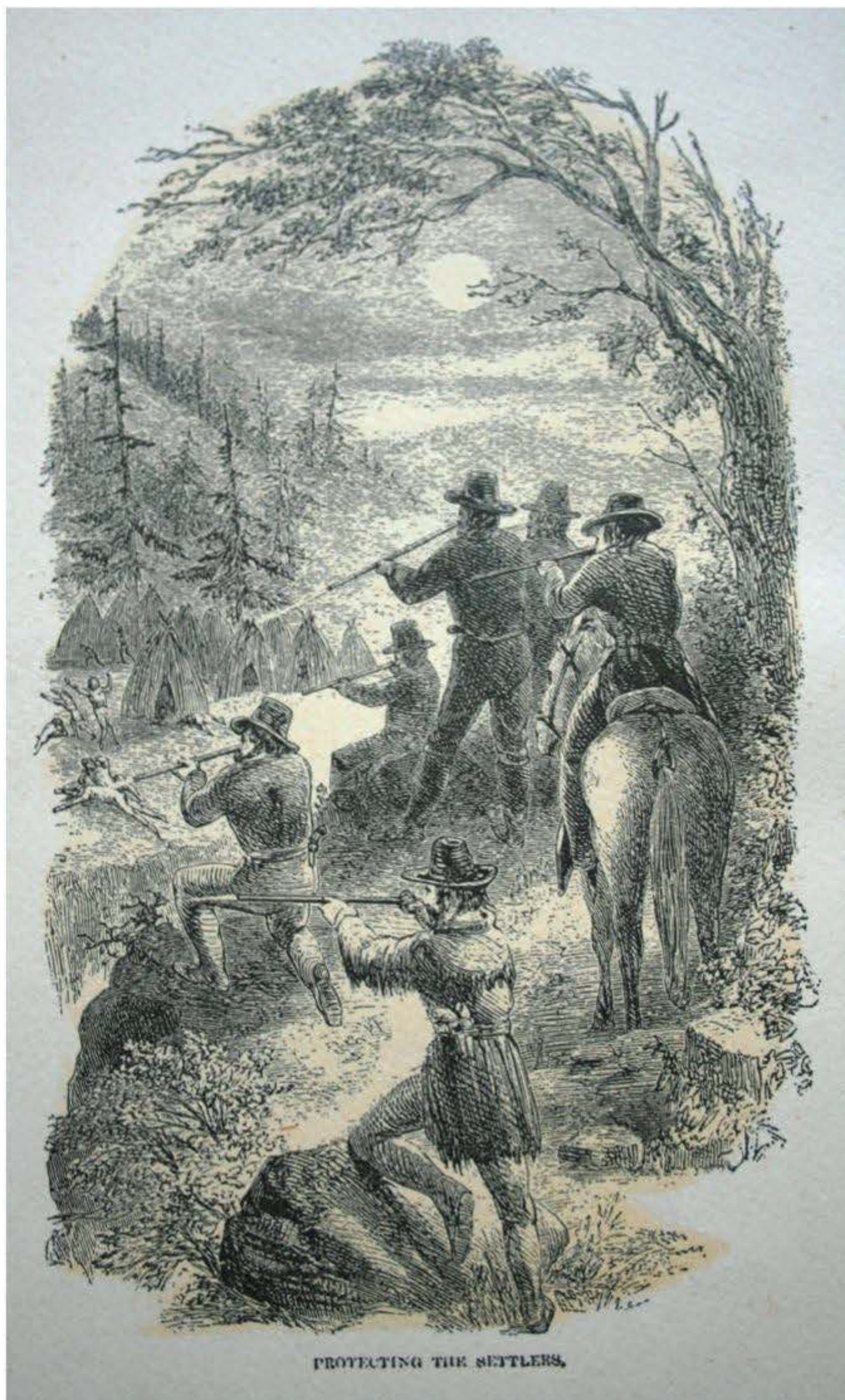
As we have seen, immigrants to the United States contended with race-related discrimination and hardship in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries. Native-born populations did as well. Native Americans confronted seizures of their lands and forced assimilation, while African Americans faced lynchings and consistent denial of their rights as citizens and as human beings. We can describe these experiences as forms of **structural violence** in that government policies and practices inflicted specific institutional harm on Native Americans and African Americans.

Native Americans: Appropriating Lands, Assimilating Tribes

As discussed in the previous chapter, Indian removal policies beginning in the 1830s displaced Native Americans from their lands. Whites attempted to justify this displacement by arguing that Native Americans had not made appropriate use of the territory (Berger 2009). These policies excluded Native Americans from white society and forced them to relocate to undesirable areas. On the heels of Indian removal, the **1851 Indian Appropriations Act** created reservations for Native Americans and provided funds for relocation to these communal lands.

During what is known as the **Allotment and Assimilation Period** from the 1870s to the 1920s, the oppression of Native Americans intensified, and two-thirds of Native American lands were lost. The **1871 Indian Appropriations Act** declared that the U.S. government would no longer sign treaties with Native American tribes.



▲ The appropriation of Native American lands was enacted through violence. This image depicts settlers murdering the Yuki people in California in 1861.

This act made it easier for the U.S. government to appropriate native lands. The 1887 **Dawes Act** then forced Native Americans to give up their communal lands and to claim individual ownership of plots. Native Americans were allotted a specific amount of land per family, and any remaining land was sold to white settlers. These allotment policies continued until the 1934 **Indian Reorganization Act**, which finally ended them and facilitated tribal self-government to a certain degree.

While the Dawes Act forced native people to give up their lands, a federal program obliged many Native American children to attend strict boarding schools (Noel 2002). These schools required students to renounce their languages and heritage. In the words of Captain Richard Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, the mission of these schools was to “[k]ill the Indian in him and save the man” (quoted in Berger 2009, 629). As Bethany Berger (2009) argues, the forced assimilation of Native Americans enabled whites to further their encroachment on Native American lands.

African Americans and the Struggle for Rights

Native-born blacks, exploited for their labor power by wealthy whites, also struggled to gain and retain fundamental rights. In the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision of 1857, the Supreme Court ruled that free blacks were not citizens of the United States. Even after slavery ended in 1865 and blacks were granted the right to vote in 1868, they still faced tremendous barriers to full citizenship (Franklin and Moss 2000).

In 1865, 4 million Africans and their descendants were freed after centuries of enslavement. The end of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery marked the beginning of the **Reconstruction** era (1865–1877), during which the fragmented country attempted to reunite after a devastating war. The status of freed slaves in the United States was a matter of controversy during this time. Many southern states were reluctant to grant former slaves citizenship rights and did not do so until the enactment of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, which effectively overturned the *Dred Scott* decision. Newly vested with citizenship and the right to vote, many black men were elected to public office in southern states. The first South Carolina legislature after the Civil War comprised eighty-seven blacks and forty whites. Blacks also were elected at the national level: between 1869 and 1901, there were two black senators and twenty blacks in the House of Representatives. Yet the newly secured rights of blacks would be strongly challenged (Franklin and Moss 2000).

Many whites were unhappy with the rise of blacks to positions of power. In the aftermath of the Civil War, whites began to organize in their own interest

1851 Indian Appropriations Act Legislation that created reservations for Native Americans.

Allotment and Assimilation Period The oppression of Native Americans from the 1870s to the 1920s, when two-thirds of Native American lands were lost and federal boarding schools forced students to assimilate.

1871 Indian Appropriations Act Legislation that declared the U.S. government would no longer sign treaties with Native American tribes.

Dawes Act (1887) Legislation that forced Native Americans to give up their communal lands and claim individual ownership of their lands.

Indian Reorganization Act (1934) Legislation that ended allotment policies for Native American land.

Reconstruction The period from 1865 to 1877 in the United States, when the country attempted to reunite after the Civil War.

and established a variety of secret orders, including the well-known Ku Klux Klan and the Knights of the White Camellia. Klan members as well as members of other secret orders used intimidation, murder, arson, and bribery to deprive blacks of political equality. Blacks were instructed not to vote and were threatened with beatings and murder if they did so. Whites located polling places far from black communities and blocked roads to keep blacks from voting.

The determination of whites to maintain political power in the South came to a head in the 1890s, when nearly all southern states passed suffrage amendments that effectively disenfranchised blacks. In Mississippi, for example, legislators wrote a suffrage amendment that imposed a poll tax, excluded people who had been convicted of certain crimes, and required literacy tests. These measures prevented most blacks in the state from voting. Other states followed suit, enacting grandfather clauses, poll taxes, and literacy requirements that led to the disenfranchisement of most southern blacks (Franklin and Moss 2000).

Although lynchings occurred across the country and victims included Jews, Italians, Mexicans, and Native Americans, most victims were African Americans in the South. Between 1884 and 1900, there were more than 2,500 lynchings. Another 1,000 people were lynched in the first fifteen years

> Cross burning at Klan members' meeting, circa 1900.



of the twentieth century. In addition to lynching, blacks in both the South and the North faced intimidation and violence at the hands of whites. In the first few decades of the twentieth century, race riots exploded in cities across the country, and blacks bore the brunt of the violence (Pfeifer 2006).

One of many examples of race riots occurred in Springfield, Ohio, in 1904. A mob raided a jail where a black man was being held on charges that he had killed a white police officer. The mob tore the man from his cell, shot him, and hanged him from a telegraph pole. Members of the mob then took their wrath to the black section of town, where they beat many blacks and burned eight buildings to the ground. Similar riots happened in East Saint Louis, Illinois, and in other cities, when white workers protested the influx of black workers from the South (Franklin and Moss 2000).

In addition to outright violence by hate groups and lynch mobs, blacks also faced state-imposed legal segregation (separation of racial groups) and political disenfranchisement. These measures were known collectively as Jim Crow laws, a set of laws in place between 1876 and 1965 that mandated segregation in all public facilities (as we will discuss in Chapter Three). These laws ranged from the segregation of public schools and transportation to the establishment of separate restaurants, drinking fountains, and regiments in the U.S. military. The legal segregation of public schools continued until the Supreme Court declared public school segregation unconstitutional in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The remaining Jim Crow laws were overturned with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965—one hundred years after the abolition of slavery.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Since the creation of the United States, whiteness has carried with it undeniable privileges. For Syrians, Mexicans, Armenians, Irish, Jews, and Italians, the importance of being considered white has been a reflection of this privilege. As



▲ Lynching scene in Texas, 1905: A black man, accused of having attacked a white woman, is hanged immediately.

we will discuss in Chapter Seven, Peggy McIntosh describes white privilege as “an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, code-books, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks” (1989, 10).

Nonwhiteness, in contrast, carries burdens. Because of this disparity, fifty people contested their racial status in the courts between 1878 and 1952 (Haney-Lopez 2006) in a personal and collective mission to attain full citizenship. The Japanese community paid close attention to the *Ozawa* case in the hope that Japanese people in the United States would be classified as white and thus be able to attain citizenship. The Indian community watched the *Thind* case just as closely. In a very different way, Irish, Italians, Jews, and other new immigrants discovered the advantages associated with whiteness in the United States. At the same time, Native Americans and African Americans faced hardships associated with the idea of race.

As the histories recounted in this chapter demonstrate, those who have had the power to define whiteness have benefited from its privileges. Whiteness is valuable only as long as some people are not labeled as white, and it is meaningful only if we endow it with meaning.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

intelligence testing 38

eugenics 40

pseudoscience 42

Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) 43

Immigration Act of 1917 43

Johnson-Reed Act (1924) 45

Naturalization Law of 1790 46

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(1934) 55

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2.1 How did scientific racism evolve over the twentieth century? (pp. 38–42)

- In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scientists continued their quest to demonstrate the supposed superiority of the white race. To do so, they used craniometry and intelligence testing, and many promoted eugenics.

Review

- » What is the origin of intelligence testing?
- » What were some of the consequences of the eugenics movement?

Critical Thinking

- » What is an example of contesting the boundary of whiteness?
- » Why does Stephen Gould argue that the primary error in intelligence testing is reification (making something abstract more concrete or real)?

2.2 How were U.S. immigration and citizenship policies racially exclusionary? (pp. 42–47)

- Scientific racism influenced U.S. immigration and citizenship policies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- The first major piece of immigration legislation in the United States was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred Chinese immigrants from entering the United States.
- The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act, based on eugenicist ideas, was designed to increase the number of Nordic immigrants to the United States by setting country-specific quotas.
- In 1868, African Americans gained citizenship rights under the Fourteenth Amendment.
- Native Americans did not gain U.S. citizenship rights until 1924.

Review

- » What was the significance of the Chinese Exclusion Act?
- » What changes did the Johnson-Reed Act make to immigration policy?
- » How did the Fourteenth Amendment change who was eligible for citizenship?

Critical Thinking

- » How were eugenicists able to influence immigration quota laws in the early twentieth century?
- » How were nonwhites excluded from citizenship?

2.3 How did legal decisions shape racial categories? (pp. 47–49)

- In several prominent court cases, plaintiffs argued for their inclusion in the category of whiteness.
- In the contradictory Supreme Court decisions of *Thind* and *Ozawa*, judges drew from their own biases when deciding who was legally white.

Review

- » How has whiteness been legally constructed?
- » Why does the author argue that there is a contradiction between the *Singh* and *Thind* cases?

Critical Thinking

- » What is the significance of the claim that “whiteness is what the court says it is”?

2.4 Where did European immigrants fit into the racial hierarchy in the United States? (pp. 49–54)

- When European immigrants arrived in the United States, they learned to think of themselves as white.
- The Irish replaced black workers in several industries and then worked to exclude blacks from wage labor.
- Italians faced discrimination as Southern Europeans, yet benefited from their legal status as whites.
- Jewish immigrants were relegated to low-paying jobs and crowded housing yet enjoyed the benefits of citizenship, which were denied to many non-whites.

Review

- » Historically speaking, what are some of the privileges associated with whiteness?
- » What is the difference between racialization and assimilation?

Critical Thinking

- » What can we learn about whiteness by comparing the treatment of Asian Americans to that of European Americans in the early twentieth century?
- » What does it mean to say that the Irish, Italians, and Jews became white?
- » Why would Syrian, Jewish, Italian, and Irish immigrants want to be classified as white?
- » How have the privileges associated with whiteness changed over time?

2.5 What forms of racial and structural violence did Native Americans and African Americans confront in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? (pp. 54–57)

- Native Americans lost two-thirds of their lands as a consequence of allotment acts.
- White hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan emerged in opposition to the perceived rise in power of black voters and politicians.

Review

- » What are some differences between the forms of violence that Native Americans and African Americans faced during the early twentieth century?

Critical Thinking

- » How were Indian boarding schools a form of structural violence?
- » Why do you think lynchings were common during this period?

Talking about Race

Europeans who came to the United States before 1924 arrived during a time when there were few to no restrictions on immigration. Those Europeans subsequently had many options for legalization that are no longer available to today's immigrants. You may be able to use these facts in conversations about contemporary immigration. Many descendants of Europeans believe that their ancestors came to the United States the so-called right way and that immigrants who come today are not law-abiding. Using the knowledge you have gained in this chapter, seek out productive conversations about both historical and contemporary illegal immigration.



Blind. Dane Chanase. Oil on canvas, 111 × 86.5 cm. (*Private Collection/Photo © Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images*)

3

Racial Ideologies

from the 1920s to
the Present

As You Read

- 3.1 How do racial ideologies both persist and change?
- 3.2 In what ways was 1920 to 1965 an era of overt racism?
- 3.3 What role did the civil rights movement play in promoting change?
- 3.4 What are some of the forms that racism takes today?
- 3.5 What is color-blind racism, and how does it perpetuate inequality?
- 3.6 What did the elections of Presidents Obama and Trump reveal about racial ideologies in the United States?

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THE PERSISTENCE OF THE COLOR LINE

*Racial Politics and the
Obama Presidency*

RANDALL KENNEDY

Author of *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word*

In 1955, African American Rosa Parks was arrested after refusing to sit in the back of a bus in the section designated for blacks. Since the mid-twentieth century, the racial terrain has clearly changed in the United States. Nevertheless, as Randall Kennedy, author of *The Persistence of the Color Line*, describes, race continues to be of great import in our society.

There was a time—now it seems long ago—when it appeared, momentarily, that America had taken a giant stride toward redemption. After all, the electorate selected Barack Hussein Obama, a black man, to be president of the United States. The hope, pride, relief, and astonishment generated by this unprecedented event provoked all sorts of optimistic declarations. People who had, in emotional self-defense, habitually eschewed patriotism, now waved American flags enthusiastically. People who had doubted that Americans would ever be able to overcome racial alienation now believed that they could. Expressions of exhilaration produced sounds and scenes reminiscent of reactions to such landmark events as the Emancipation Proclamation; Joe Louis’s victory over Max Schmeling; the “I Have a Dream” speech of Martin Luther King, Jr.; and the landing on the moon. Parties erupted featuring such anthems as “Ain’t NO Stoppin’ Us Now,” “A Change Is Gonna Come,” and “We’re a Winner.” Strangers danced and cried with one another. People named newborns after the president-elect. On the day after the election, one of my students at Harvard Law School tearfully declared that in light of Obama’s election she was reconsidering her career plans. His example, she said, made her want to be a better person. A few days later, I received a letter from an inmate of a maximum-security prison in Indiana that said the same thing.

On Election Night one heard repeatedly echoes of Maya Angelou’s statement “I never thought I’d see a black president in the White House in my lifetime.” Oprah Winfrey exclaimed that Election Night was “the most electrifying” moment she had ever experienced. People commonly remarked that they felt as if they were dreaming. The day after the election, on a Listserv organized by racial-minority law professors, a distinguished black jurist remarked,

“When I woke up this morning. I said to my husband, ‘I had the weirdest dream last night. I dreamed that a black man named Barack Hussein Obama became president of the United States. Is that weird or what?’”

...

Electing a black American as president is treated as remarkable. It is—but only against the backdrop of a longstanding betrayal of democratic principles. When Shirley Chisholm ran for president in 1968, she declined to portray her pioneering candidacy as a reason for celebration. Why should it be such a big deal, she asked, for a black woman to run for the presidency? Forty years later, the low expectations to which Chisholm objected were poignantly revealed at the moment of Obama’s victory. When people exclaimed that they never thought that they would live to see the day a black man [was] elected president, they were expressing how little they expected of their fellow Americans. They were saying that they didn’t anticipate that within their lifetimes the (white) American electorate would be willing under any circumstances to entrust to a black, any black, the highest office in the land. For many, the joyful tears on November 5, 2008, reflected surprise that a sufficient number of whites would be willing to vote for an African American to enable him to become president. That surprise was founded upon a realistic appreciation of the extent to which the race line in America has cruelly thwarted talents and aspirations. The tears of election night were a reflection of that somber reality.

Source: Kennedy 2011, 3–5.

The election of Barack Obama to the presidency did not signal the end of racism. It did, however, indicate a change in racial ideologies in the United States. Racial ideologies change over time because the needs and interests of the elite change. As Karl Marx wrote in *The German Ideology*, “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas.” American racial ideologies have evolved such that it’s possible to have a black president, even while incarceration rates are disproportionately high for black men, and even while life expectancy for African Americans continues to be shorter than for whites. In this chapter, we consider how racial ideologies have evolved, as well as how they continue to reproduce and justify persistent racial disparities.

hegemony When an idea or view of the world becomes accepted by most people as common sense.

prejudice The belief that people belong to distinct racial groups with innate hierarchical differences that can be measured and judged.

discrimination The practice of treating people differently on the basis of their race.

racial ideology A set of principles and ideas that (1) divides people into different racial groups and (2) serves the interests of one group.

color-blind racism A racial ideology that explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics.

stereotype Widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of types of people or things.

IDEOLOGICAL CONSISTENCY AND CHANGE

The work of Patricia Hill Collins (2004) is useful for understanding ideological shifts. As she explains: “When ideologies that defend racism become taken-for-granted and appear to be natural and inevitable, they become hegemonic. Few question them and the social hierarchies they defend” (96). When Collins explains that racial ideologies are **hegemonic**, she means that they become so widely accepted that they become common sense.

Racism encompasses both racial **prejudice**—the belief that people belong to distinct races with innate hierarchical differences that can be measured and judged—and racial **discrimination**—the practice of treating people differently on the basis of their race. An ideology is more than an individual prejudice: it is a set of principles and ideas that embodies the interests of a societal group. A **racial ideology**, then, is a set of principles and ideas that (1) divides people into different racial groups and (2) serves the interests of one group. Ideologies are usually created by the dominant group and reflect the interests of that group.

Racial ideologies in the United States were established during the colonial era. They have since evolved over time from primarily a folk concept in the eighteenth century to a pseudoscientific concept in the nineteenth century, a scientific association in the twentieth century, and cultural explanations following the horrors of World War II. Today, many scholars of race describe the most pervasive racial ideology as **color-blind racism**, in which race is not explicitly acknowledged, but individual prejudices, acts of racial discrimination, and structures of inequality work to benefit whites (Bonilla-Silva 2013). Color-blind racism can be applied to almost any arena of society, from mass incarceration to the educational gap between blacks and whites, and is used to explain racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics.

The case of Trayvon Martin (discussed in the Voices feature on page 67) raises several questions about racial ideology today. Was George Zimmerman’s perception of Trayvon Martin shaped by the fact that Trayvon was a black boy wearing a hoodie? As we will discuss in Chapter Five, the media feed us a constant stream of images that shape our beliefs. The media also perpetuate **stereotypes**, widely held but fixed and oversimplified images or ideas of types of people or things. One very common racial stereotype is that black men who wear hoodies and baggy jeans are dangerous. Defenders of Trayvon Martin and his family argued that Zimmerman is racist, and Zimmerman was quick to defend himself by saying that he is not. However, George Zimmerman does not have to identify as a racist to be influenced by racial ideologies. That is how ideology works: it is so pervasive that we do not realize its influence on us.

Trayvon Martin



George Zimmerman ended Trayvon Martin's life, yet was acquitted of murder.



On the evening of February 26, 2012, seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin was walking down the street in Sanford, Florida, carrying an iced tea and a bag of Skittles he had just bought at a convenience store. He and his father were visiting his father's

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fiancée, who lived in a gated community. Self-appointed neighborhood watchman George Zimmerman, who was twenty-eight years old, saw Trayvon and called the police to report what he perceived to be Trayvon's suspicious behavior: walking slowly in the rain, wearing a hoodie. The police told Zimmerman not to pursue Trayvon and that they would send a patrol car. Shortly afterward, however, a fight broke out between Zimmerman and Martin. It is unclear who started the fight, but a few moments later, Trayvon Martin lay dead on the sidewalk. When the police arrived, they took the body but did not take Zimmerman into custody. Zimmerman claimed self-defense and was not arrested.

Meanwhile, Trayvon's parents became worried when he did not return from the store, and they began to look for their son. They did not learn until two days later that Trayvon had been killed and that his killer had walked free. Trayvon's parents used social media to draw attention to their plight. Two weeks after Trayvon's death, they created a Change.org petition that eventually garnered over 2 million signatures. People around the country mobilized in response to what many viewed as a racially motivated crime, one downplayed by a racist police department that did not arrest George Zimmerman because he was a white man who had killed a black boy. Six weeks after the murder, Zimmerman was charged with second-degree murder. He was placed in custody but released days later on a \$150,000 bail.

On July 13, 2013, a jury acquitted George Zimmerman of both second-degree murder and manslaughter.

Source: Associated Press 2012.

In today's society, no one wants to be labeled a racist. This is the paradox of color-blind racism: how do we have racism without racists? In this case, an African American friend of Zimmerman's appeared on television and stated: "I'm a black male, and all that I know is that George has never given me any reason whatsoever to believe he has anything against people of color." Other media reports pointed to the fact that Zimmerman has an Afro-Peruvian grandmother to buttress the claim that Zimmerman cannot be racist (Blodgett 2012). The claim that one can't be racist because one has black friends is common in a color-blind society (Bonilla-Silva 2010). However, the claim that one can't be racist because one has black family members is more typical of Latin America (Golash-Boza 2010). This instance is one in which we may be witnessing a Latin Americanization of racial ideologies in the United States—an issue discussed further in Chapter Seven.

Finally, Trayvon Martin's killing reveals another aspect of our changing racial ideologies: George Zimmerman has a white father, a Peruvian mother, and an Afro-Peruvian grandmother. This set of facts raises two questions: Is Zimmerman white? And does his racial identity have anything to do with whether and how he carried out racially motivated actions? These questions and the complexities surrounding the case underscore the importance of racial ideologies as societal factors that continue to be in flux.

One indication of change is that Trayvon's killing was handled very differently than it would have been before the civil rights movement. A story from 1955 provides a point of comparison. In 1955, Emmett Till, an African American boy from Chicago, was visiting his relatives in Mississippi when he was tortured and brutally murdered by two white men. His murderers—Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam—were acquitted, although they publicly admitted to the murder after the acquittal. In 1955, Bryant and Milam were protected by an outwardly racist justice system that refused to punish whites for killing blacks. In 2013, Zimmerman was acquitted even though he was responsible for Trayvon Martin's death. Zimmerman relied on color-blind self-defense laws, whereas Bryant and Milam relied on deep-seated racism that made it difficult for white jurors to convict a fellow white man for the killing of a black man.

Social media enabled Trayvon's parents to spread the news quickly about his murder. Since then, several police killings have sparked widespread outrage, and again social media played a major role in spreading the news. On July 14, 2014, New York Police Department officer Daniel Pantaleo put forty-three-year-old Eric Garner in a chokehold and strangled him to death. A video of Garner's death circulated widely on social media, where Garner is heard saying, "I can't breathe." Despite widespread outrage, the grand jury did not indict Pantaleo. Three weeks later, John Crawford was shot dead in a Walmart

by a police officer in Beavercreek, Ohio. Just four days later, on August 9, 2014, teenager Michael Brown was killed by officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri. The killing of Michael Brown led to nationwide protests that lasted nearly a year (Taylor 2016). These killings and others led to the creation of the **Black Lives Matter** hashtag and movement, which are part of a broad campaign against racial violence.

It is remarkable that some of the largest marches against racism and police brutality occurred while the United States had a black president and a black attorney general. The persistence of racist ideas and practices both during and following the Obama era provides insight into the deep-seated nature of racial ideologies in the United States.

To be sure, much has changed since the civil rights movement, yet some things are remarkably similar. Racial fears and racial injustice are still at play,

Black Lives Matter

A hashtag and movement aimed at ending antiblack racism and violence in all its permutations.



▲ A series of police killings led to the creation of the Black Lives Matter hashtag and movement, which are part of a broad campaign against racial violence.

segregation A policy of racial separation ensuring that whites have access to the best opportunities and facilities.

Jim Crow laws A set of laws in place between 1876 and 1965 that mandated racial segregation.

Plessy v. Ferguson 1896 U.S. Supreme Court case ruling that state laws requiring racial segregation in public facilities were constitutional, as long as they were “separate but equal.”

though they have evolved. Later in the chapter, we will continue to consider what has changed in the United States since the 1960s. But first, we will look at some of the most egregious instances of overt racism in the mid-twentieth century: segregation, the mass deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans, the internment of people of Japanese descent, and the Tuskegee syphilis experiment.

OVERT RACISM IN THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY

The end of slavery did not end the oppression of people of color in the United States. Instead, after the brief but promising period of Reconstruction, the country witnessed the rise of discriminatory laws and the continuation of overt racial discrimination.

Segregation

Between 1896 and 1954, it was legal to deny African Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans access to public schools and other facilities designated for whites. Such **segregation** laws ensured that whites had access to the best opportunities, education, housing, and even seats on the bus. The majority of states enacted some variant of these laws—often referred to as **Jim Crow**—prohibiting nonwhites from marrying whites, living in white neighborhoods, riding in the same streetcars, attending the same events, and enrolling in the same schools. Jim Crow laws existed because the Supreme Court had ruled in 1896 in the case of **Plessy v. Ferguson** that state laws requiring racial

segregation in public facilities were constitutional, as long as they were “separate but equal.” The *Plessy* decision had meant that states were free to pass and enforce laws segregating schools, public transit, and any other public place.

Mass Deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans

In the early twentieth century, segregation was in place to keep whites and nonwhites in separate social spaces. During this same time, legislators developed immigration



▲ The majority of states enacted some variant of segregation laws, legally denying non-whites access to facilities designated for whites only.

policies aimed at engineering the racial makeup of the United States. In California, although the growing agricultural sector depended on labor from China, Japan, and the Philippines, white nativists fought to pass legislation that would prevent Asians from migrating to the United States. The Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, followed by implementation of the Asiatic Barred Zone in 1917, ended legal Asian labor migration to the United States. This law in turn created labor shortages just as agribusiness was expanding. Accordingly, agribusiness owners turned to Mexico to recruit laborers to come pick crops in the United States (Hernandez 2010). By 1930, there were about 1.5 million Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the United States (Balderrama and Rodríguez 2006).

During the Great Depression (1929–1940), unemployment rates in the United States soared and poverty became widespread. In this time of fear and need, many Americans pointed their fingers at Mexicans and blamed them for the crisis. Anti-Mexican sentiment made it easy for many Americans to see the mass deportation of Mexicans as a viable measure to ease economic pressures. Balderrama and Rodríguez (2006) estimate that the vast majority of people of Mexican origin living in the United States at the time were deported in the 1930s: as many as a million Mexicans and their children (who were often U.S. citizens) were repatriated to Mexico during this decade.

Many of these deportations were conducted through raids on Mexican communities across the United States. Immigration agents went from door to door demanding verification of legal residence and arresting anyone who could not provide it. Agents even conducted raids in public places. In one instance in 1931, federal agents descended on La Placita, a public park in Los Angeles popular among Mexicans. Approximately 400 Mexicans were enjoying the afternoon in the park when the agents arrived, closed off the entrances, and ordered everyone present to line up and produce documentation of legal entry and residency. Those who could not produce documentation were detained for further questioning, and many were deported. These raids spread fear throughout the Mexican community and set the tone of tension for decades to come (Balderrama and Rodríguez 2006).

In 2003, the California Senate Select Committee on Citizen Participation held hearings on the repatriation of Mexicans, and the California legislature passed a bill authorizing the creation of a commission to explore and document the repatriation. The bill, however, never became law because of a veto by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (Johnson 2005). Notably, although there were undocumented Europeans throughout the United States during the Depression, this mass deportation campaign focused exclusively on Mexicans.

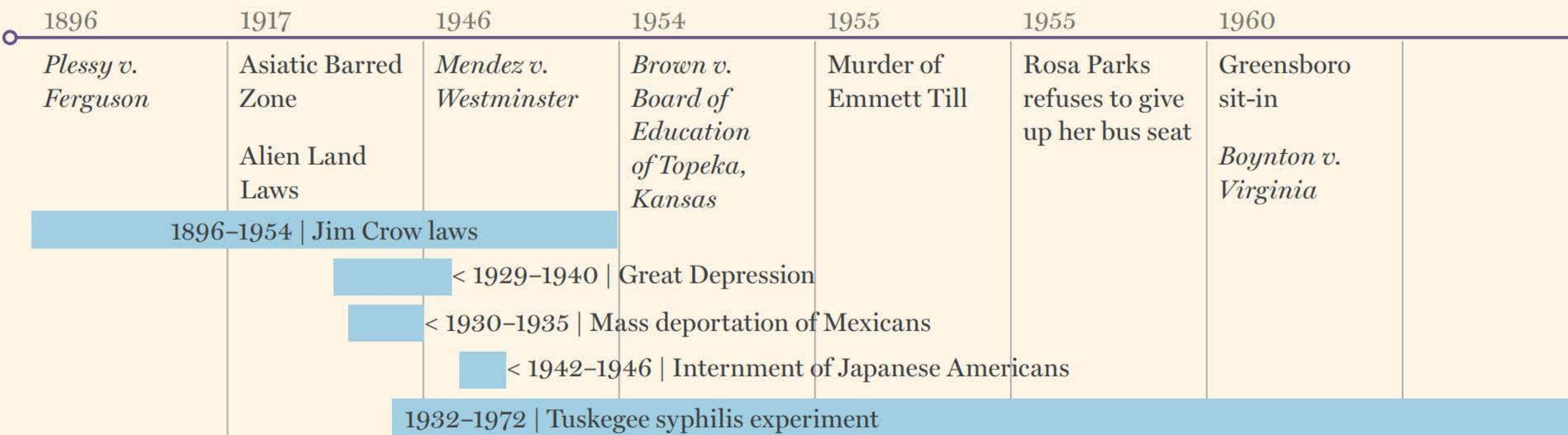
During the 2016 presidential campaign, much of candidate Donald Trump’s platform centered on immigration—with promises to “build a wall” and “deport them all.” These slogans and threats of mass deportation are based on the same set of racial ideologies that led to Chinese exclusion and the mass deportation of Mexicans.

Internment of Japanese and Japanese Americans

In the early twentieth century, Japanese immigrants began to arrive in California and Hawaii to work in the agriculture sector. The Japanese often were skilled agricultural workers, and most had a primary school education. Many began as farmhands and hoped to ascend the agricultural ladder, first as sharecroppers, then as tenant farmers, and finally as landowners. However, as increasing numbers of Japanese immigrants became landowners and entered into direct competition with their former white employers in California, white Californians began to protest and insist on the passage of laws, such as the Alien Land Laws of 1917, which prevented people ineligible for citizenship (such as the Japanese) from owning land. The children of Japanese immigrants, however, who were born in the United States were eligible to own land, as they were citizens of the country by birth. As increasing numbers of second-generation Japanese immigrants came of age, white Californians searched for other measures to cut out the competition and prevent the Japanese from owning land (Aoki 1998).

The beginning of World War II and the emergence of Japan as an enemy of the state provided just this opportunity. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese

Selected Critical Moments in the Evolution of Racial Ideologies



navy attacked Pearl Harbor. Two months later, on February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which ordered that people of Japanese descent be detained and sent to internment camps. Japanese families, many of whom had lived in the United States for decades, were ordered to pack



< During World War II, Japanese families, such as the Mochida family, were ordered to evacuate and were placed in internment camps.

1961	1964	1965	1968	1973	2003	2013	2015
First Free- dom Ride	Civil Rights Act of 1964 bans discrimi- nation in employment and public accommo- dations	Voting Rights Act restores voting rights to all citizens Publication of the Moynihan Report	Civil Rights Act of 1968 outlaws housing dis- crimination	NAACP files a class-action lawsuit over the Tuskegee syphilis experiment	California Senate Select Committee on Citizen Participa- tion holds hearings on Mexican repatriation	George Zimmerman acquitted after fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin	Emergence of Black Lives Matter in response to fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and others

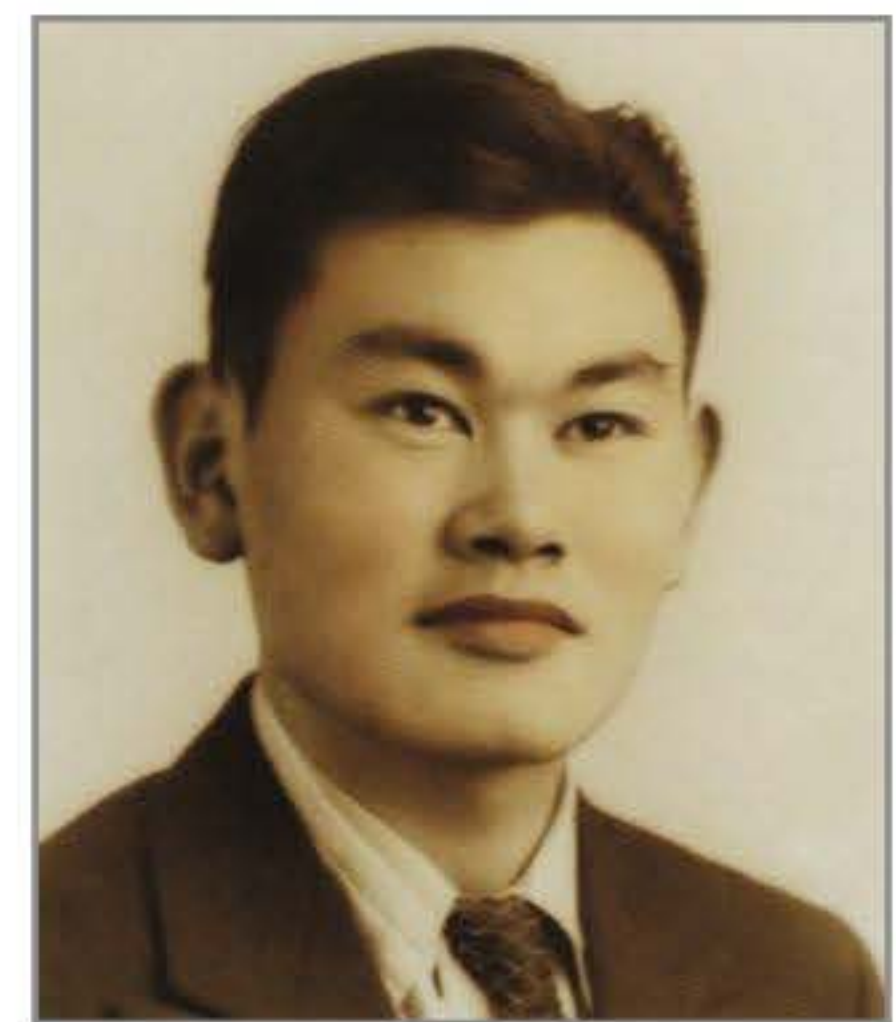
their things and evacuate their homes within forty-eight hours. Many families sold all their belongings and even their homes for a fraction of their value, as it was not clear when or if they would be able to return.

During World War II, the United States government imprisoned over 120,000 men, women, and children of Japanese descent—nearly everyone of Japanese origin living on the U.S. mainland. Over 60 percent of the people sent to internment camps were U.S. citizens, and they were kept in the camps for an average of two to three years (Nagata 1991; Ng 2002). The justification for the internment of Japanese and Japanese Americans was that the nation was at war with Japan. The United States was also at war with Germany and Italy, however, and very few Germans and Italians were detained; and they certainly were not rounded up and put into camps.

voices

Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu

Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu was born in Oakland, California, in 1919, to Japanese immigrant parents who ran a flower nursery. In May 1942, when Fred was twenty-three, his parents were sent to an internment camp. Fred, a U.S. citizen by birth, resisted. He changed his name to Clyde Sarah and had minor plastic surgery performed on his eyes so that he would look less Japanese. However, he was arrested just two weeks after his parents were placed in internment. Fred was charged with violating military orders and was convicted in September 1942. He was given five years of probation and taken first to a temporary camp in San Bruno, California, and then to a permanent incarceration camp in Topaz, Utah, where he and his family remained interned for the duration of World War II. Upon his arrest, Korematsu filed a case that led the U.S. Supreme Court to examine the internment order's legality, which it upheld in a 1944 decision. Korematsu continued to speak out against the injustice, and in 1980, President Jimmy Carter appointed a special commission to investigate and ultimately reopen the case. As a result, Korematsu's conviction was overturned in 1983; however, the 1944 Supreme Court ruling still stands.



Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu.

Sources: Ng 2002 and <http://korematsuinstitute.org/institute/aboutfred/>.

The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment

The prevailing racial ideologies of the period that produced the internment of the Japanese and the mass deportation of Mexicans also permitted the severe mistreatment of African Americans. One example is the Tuskegee syphilis experiment. In 1932, the Public Health Service (PHS) and the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama recruited nearly 400 poor black men for a study of the long-term effects of syphilis. They determined that the men had syphilis but did not give them this diagnosis, instead telling them they would be treated for “bad blood,” a nonspecific, nonmedical term used to describe several illnesses. Unable to afford health care, these men agreed to participate in the study in exchange for free medical exams, free meals, and burial insurance (Reverby 2009).

Rationalizing that the study participants would not normally have access to health care, given their poverty, the PHS doctors did not attempt to treat the men for syphilis. Instead, they used the study to determine from observation while they were alive and from autopsies once they were dead what untreated syphilis would do to the body (Reverby 2009). When the study began, there was no proven treatment for syphilis. The PHS doctors led the men to believe they were being treated for their illness by giving them aspirin and aromatic colored elixirs that had no medical purpose. In 1947, it became widely known in the medical community that penicillin would cure syphilis. Yet, because



< During the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, black men were diagnosed with syphilis, yet were never treated for it or told they had it.

the Tuskegee scientists were interested in seeing how the disease spread and killed, they did not make penicillin available to the study participants.

The study encompassed a total of 624 participants and lasted four decades. It finally came to an end in 1972, when Peter Buxtun, an employee of the PHS, leaked the story to the media and sparked a national controversy. By that time, dozens of the men had died, and many of their wives and children had become infected with syphilis. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed a class-action lawsuit in 1973. This resulted in a \$9 million settlement, which was divided among the study's participants, in addition to the promise of the provision of free health care and treatment to the men who were still living, as well as their family members who had been infected. The government, however, did not apologize formally for the unethical study until 1997 (Reverby 2009).

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THE COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

civil rights movement

A series of mass protests between about 1950 and 1980 aiming to achieve racial equality in law and practice.

Mendez v. Westminster

A 1947 California federal circuit court case ruling that segregating Mexican American children was unconstitutional.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas 1954 U.S.

Supreme Court ruling that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal and in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Segregation, the mass deportation of Mexicans, the internment of the Japanese, and the Tuskegee study occurred primarily because of the prevailing racial ideologies at the time. We can imagine that mass detention of Italian Americans would have caused much more controversy in the 1940s than the detention of Japanese Americans did and that an experiment similar to the Tuskegee syphilis experiment would have ended much sooner had the participants been white. Today, most Americans are appalled to learn of these dark moments in the country's history. This reaction is indicative of a change in attitudes about race over the past century—a change we can trace, in large part, to the civil rights movement.

The **civil rights movement** sought to end Jim Crow by first achieving legal equality and subsequently implementing laws that were already on the books. One of the first victories of the movement was the 1947 case of *Mendez v. Westminster*, in which the federal circuit court in California ruled that segregating children of Mexican descent was unconstitutional. The *Mendez* case was a critical forerunner to the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. With this decision, which overturned the ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court determined that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal.

Despite these rulings, it would take more than a court decision for non-whites, particularly African Americans, to gain equal access to education and other state institutions. African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos,

Puerto Ricans, and Native Americans organized a series of mass protests between 1950 and 1980 that would become part of the civil rights movement. Notable legal victories of the civil rights movement include the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned discrimination in employment practices and public accommodations; the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which restored voting rights to all citizens; and the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which outlawed housing discrimination. These legal victories came about in large part as a result of widespread civil disobedience carried out by African Americans and their allies in the 1950s and 1960s.

Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott

In the 1950s, African Americans in the Jim Crow South were forced to sit at the back of the bus; the front rows were reserved for whites. Even when the back of the bus was full, blacks were not permitted to sit in any empty seats in the front rows. If the white section of the bus was full, however, whites



< Rosa Parks on a Montgomery bus the day after the segregation codes were repealed, with a white reporter behind her.

could demand that blacks give up their seats. Bus drivers and white passengers enforced these rules. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks was seated in the black section of the bus when the bus driver ordered her to move so that a white passenger could have a seat. She refused, and the bus driver called the police. Rosa Parks was arrested for her violation of the city code, which indicated that bus drivers could tell passengers where to sit. The arrest of the forty-two-year-old Parks sparked a bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, that lasted over a year. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., became the spokesperson of the boycott, which crippled the bus transit company's finances and eventually led to the repeal of laws permitting segregation on public transit.

Sit-Ins

On Monday, February 1, 1960, four black college students bought a few items at the F. W. Woolworth store in Greensboro, North Carolina, and then sat down at the lunch counter, which was reserved for whites. They asked to be served but were refused. They remained there for almost an hour, until the store closed. The following morning, they returned to the store, this time with a group of thirty African American students, and occupied the lunch counter for about two hours. On Wednesday, they occupied nearly all of the lunch counter's sixty-six seats. Their actions caught the attention of the press, and soon hundreds of white protestors and black supporters had rallied outside the store. By the end of the week, the Woolworth manager had decided to close the store. The Greensboro sit-in led to similar acts of civil disobedience across the country, primarily by black youth, and eventually led to the creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Together with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the SNCC was central to the civil rights movement (Carson 1981). Both organizations participated in the Freedom Rides, which we discuss next.

Freedom Rides

In 1960, the Supreme Court ruled in *Boynton v. Virginia* that segregation in interstate bus and rail stations was unconstitutional. Local authorities in the South, however, were unwilling to enforce integrationist laws.

In the summer of 1961, the **Freedom Riders** set out to test the Supreme Court's ruling. Six white and seven black volunteers from CORE and SNCC boarded a public bus in Washington, D.C., headed south. These Freedom Riders traveled peacefully through Virginia and North Carolina. But when they reached the Rock Hill bus terminal in South Carolina, a group of white protestors attacked two of the black Riders, who were waiting in the

Freedom Riders Civil rights activists who rode buses in 1961 to test the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that segregation in interstate bus and rail stations was unconstitutional.

white section of the bus terminal. No one was seriously injured, and after the police arrived, the Riders were able to continue their journey. They did not see serious violence until they arrived in Anniston, Alabama, where a mob attacked one of the buses, smashing its windows and slashing its tires. The bus was able to escape, but the mob followed the bus, and, six miles later, the mob threw a firebomb into the bus. The Riders on this bus regrouped and continued on to Birmingham, Alabama, where another mob of whites was waiting. The mob severely beat many of the passengers when they disembarked. The police were late in arriving, and many of the passengers suffered serious injuries.

After the Birmingham attacks, the Riders were unable to find a bus driver willing to take them on to Montgomery. This first Freedom Ride ended early, but it did succeed in calling attention to ongoing segregation and brutality in the South. It also helped solidify the civil rights movement and gain traction



< Elizabeth Eckford on her first day at Little Rock Central High School on September 4, 1957, surrounded by whites yelling insults at both her and the U.S. marshals ensuring the implementation of laws permitting integration.

for future Freedom Rides. And, on September 22, 1961, the Justice Department issued a ruling that prohibited separate facilities for whites and blacks in train and bus terminals (Carson 1981).

Prior to these judicial decisions and legal changes, it was permissible in the United States to deny the vote to nonwhites and to force nonwhites to attend separate and inferior schools. In addition, the victories of the civil rights movement were won despite massive and violent white resistance. This was evident in the mob attacks on the Freedom Riders, but it happened at every turn. One of the most shocking instances occurred when African American children attempted to attend schools they were legally eligible to attend, and white residents responded with brutal attacks on them.

In the twenty-first century, we can no longer imagine whites openly protesting and hurling insults at an African American girl for attending an all-white school. On the other hand, schoolchildren shouted “build a wall” at Mexican American students in the aftermath of the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president (Sims 2016). Whites no longer kill or harass blacks with exemption from punishment, although police officers are rarely punished for killing black men (Williams 2016). What has changed? And—just as important—what has not?

OLD VERSUS NEW RACISM: THE EVOLUTION OF AN IDEOLOGY

new racism An ideology in which it is not acceptable to make overtly racist statements and laws, yet racial inequality persists.

Many scholars make a distinction between old racism—which permitted the internment of the Japanese and the enslavement of Africans, for example—and a new but related ideology that perpetuates racism without such practices. In **new racism**, it is no longer acceptable to make overtly racist statements or to have overtly racist laws (P. H. Collins 2004; Bonilla-Silva 2013; Logan 2011; Harvey Wingfield and Feagin 2010). Racism did not disappear with the dismantling of slavery and Jim Crow laws, nor did the civil rights era mark the end of racism. Race scholars generally agree that the post-1965 era is distinct. Theorists Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) explain that whereas the government could once be overtly violent toward nonwhites, “in the post-civil rights era, the racial state cannot merely dominate; it must seek *hegemony*” (147) (emphasis in original). By this Omi and Winant mean that policymakers must seek to make the current racial order seem natural and normal, as it is no longer viable to have laws and practices that are explicitly racist.

Racial inequality persists today both because of our history—colonialism, slavery, and Jim Crow—and because of ongoing practices of discrimination and exclusion. The new racism is an outgrowth of past racial inequality; mass

media and popular beliefs “help manufacture the consent that makes the new racism appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable” (P. H. Collins 2004, 34). Racial inequality in the United States has become naturalized. We have come to think of it as normal that African American men are overrepresented among prisoners and that white men are overrepresented among the elite, even though we would never accept laws that overtly discriminated against African Americans.

In the United States, most people do not consider themselves to be racist, and we have laws in place that prevent overt acts of discrimination. Despite this massive change in attitudes and laws over the past century, racial inequality persists. African Americans have, on average, a mere 10 percent of the wealth that whites have (Oliver and Shapiro 2006). African American men are seven times more likely than white men to go to prison (Feagin 2001). On almost any measure, blacks and Latinos are doing worse socially and economically than whites in the United States (Logan 2011). How do we explain the persistence of racial inequality despite the social stigma associated with being a racist? One way is by looking at how different forms of racism operate. This allows us to see how some forms of racism are more acceptable than others, even though all racial ideologies serve the same purpose: to explain, justify, and normalize racial inequality and injustice.

Another reason to examine racial ideologies closely is that despite trends that demonstrate widespread racial inequality, a few prominent exceptions make it seem as if racism is a problem of the past. Most notably, the United States had an African American president, has a Latina and an African American serving on the Supreme Court, and has a woman of African American and Indian descent serving as U.S. senator of California. How do we explain these developments? Clearly, we need new ways to think and talk about race and racism. In this section, we will discuss different forms of racism and consider the extent to which these racial ideologies persist.

Biological Racism

Biological racism is the idea that whites are genetically superior to nonwhites. This idea has its origins in the scientific racism of the nineteenth century, which set out to prove whites’ superior innate intelligence. In the 1920s, the American lawyer Madison Grant argued that Nordics were the “master race” and that the United States should pass laws banning interracial marriages and ensuring the sterilization of inferior races. In the twenty-first century, it would be difficult to find people who openly advocate for the sterilization of blacks because of their biological inferiority. Nevertheless, these ideas have not completely disappeared.

biological racism The idea that whites are genetically superior to nonwhites.

As discussed in Chapter Two, one of the most prominent examples of biological racism in recent decades is a 1994 book called *The Bell Curve*. In this book, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray argue that intelligence is quantifiable. For Herrnstein and Murray, as for a century of intelligence testers before them, the fact that blacks scored lower on intelligence tests than whites provided support for the idea that blacks are innately inferior to whites. More recently, Frank Miele and Vincent Sarich argued in their 2004 book *Race: The Reality of Human Differences* that races are a biological reality and that there are measurable intellectual differences among racial groups. The publication of *The Bell Curve*, *Race: The Reality of Human Differences*, and other books and articles in this vein provide evidence of the persistence of the belief that whites are genetically or biologically superior to non-whites. However, most academics reject these views, and few Americans openly express such opinions in public spaces today. Biological racism still exists, but it is waning and is subject to virulent criticism whenever expressed.

cultural racism A way of thinking that attributes disadvantaged racial groups' lack of prosperity to their behavior and culture rather than to structural factors.

Cultural Racism

Cultural racism is a way of thinking that attributes disadvantaged racial groups' lack of prosperity to their behavior and culture rather than to structural factors. Unlike biological racism, which claims that some races are inferior because of lower intelligence, cultural racism is the standpoint that a particular culture—African American or Latino culture, for example—inhibits success.

The 1965 publication of a report by the American politician Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1927–2003) planted the seeds for many of the ideas inherent in cultural racism. The document, which has come to be known as the Moynihan Report, acknowledged the pervasiveness of poverty in the black community and yet pointed to the breakdown of the black family as one of the principal causes of this poverty. Moynihan argued that the history of slavery and racism had had detrimental consequences for the black family. He made the gendered argument that the central problem of black America was that there were too many single black mothers who were incapable of raising children on their own. His proposed solution to black poverty was restoration of black men to their rightful place as breadwinners and heads of families. For Moynihan, the solution to black poverty was to “fix” black families. This stance—which ignores structural factors such as discriminatory employment policies and practices—is typical of cultural racism. Essentially, the cultural racism argument points to the behavioral patterns and culture of African Americans as the primary cause of their poverty. Cultural racism persists today. For example, pundits often blame blacks' educational failures on dysfunctional families or

parenting styles rather than on failing schools and pervasive poverty.

Cultural racism also takes another form: teachers perceive children who invoke African American language and style as less intelligent than those who conform to dominant culture. Ann Arnett Ferguson (2001) found in her research in an elementary school that black students were more likely to get into trouble at school because of the way teachers and school administrators responded to their body language, oral expressiveness, manners, and styles. She found that children who conformed to white, middle-class cultural norms were less likely to get into trouble and more likely to do well in school, and that the use of African American forms of expressiveness in school was grounds for punishment. Ferguson also argues that when children are white or behave in a white middle-class way, they are perceived to be self-disciplined and good, while children who “behave black” are perceived as troublemakers. Ferguson’s findings point to the persistence of cultural racism: whereas white, middle-class children are rewarded for behaving in school as they and their parents do at home, working-class and poor black children are punished for speaking and acting as their parents do.

Cultural racism also affects other racialized groups in the United States. Latinas are often portrayed as “pregnant breeders” who plan to have “anchor babies” in the United States (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1995). Asians feel the brunt of the “model minority” stereotype—the myth that Asians are smarter, harder-working, and more successful than other minorities. And Native Americans are perceived alternatively as “savages” or “wise men.” The racialized stereotypes of Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos and Latinas are discussed further in Chapter Four.

Color-Blind Universalism

Dr. Martin Luther King’s dream of a day when his children “would be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character” calls for a world in which skin color is no longer the basis for discriminatory treatment. Many liberals argue that **color-blind universalism**, or color-blind liberalism—the idea that we should ignore skin color—provides the best framework for shaping a world without racial discrimination. People who promote color-blind universalism recognize that racial inequality is a problem in the United States but



▲ American politician Daniel Patrick Moynihan argued in a 1965 report that the breakdown of the black family was a principal cause of poverty in the black community. This culturally racist stance ignores structural factors such as discriminatory employment policies and practices.

color-blind universalism

The idea that we should ignore skin color.

contend that the best way to remedy racial inequality is through universalist programs that help everyone, regardless of race.

David Cochran (1999, 17) argues that “color-blind liberalism begins with the claim that the color of an individual’s skin is a morally arbitrary fact that should make no difference in the way he or she is treated.” This thinking seems to be in line with King’s dream. The problem is that we live in a society in which skin color is important. Ignoring skin color won’t make inequalities based on skin color disappear. Ironically, to achieve King’s dream of a color-blind world, we can’t just pretend that skin color is not important. Skin color and cultural groups based on skin color are real and important factors in U.S. society, and they can’t simply be wished away.

Over the course of the twentieth century, we have seen racial ideologies evolve from biological racism to cultural racism to color-blind universalism. Biological racist views attribute racial inequality to inherent differences among races. Cultural racist views blame racial inequality on cultural differences. In contrast, color-blind universalism is not a racist ideology in and of itself, but

GLOBAL VIEW

Cultural Racism in Peru

Cultural racism is not unique to the United States. In Peru, people freely express negative stereotypes with regard to blacks and indigenous peoples. When I interviewed people in Lima, Peru, in 2007, many of them spoke of blacks and indigenous peoples as having “un bajo nivel cultural” (“a low cultural level”). For example, Jorge, a forty-year-old Peruvian dentist, said that if he were to bring a black woman home, his neighbors would say, “How is it possible that he is with a black woman, because being black means that you are of a lower cultural level, a lower professional level, a lower status.”

When I asked José Manuel, a professional in his mid-thirties, how he would feel if his daughter decided to marry an indigenous man, he responded that the indigenous person would be unlikely to be civilized. Many middle-class Peruvians were uncomfortable with the idea of intermarriage and expressed their discomfort through cultural racism.

Many Peruvians also associated blacks with criminality. Fernanda, a working-class woman in her mid-forties, told me: “People of color here in Peru can be characterized as delinquents, as gang members, because, generally, it is a marginalized race. . . . The majority of people of color here are . . . bad people; they live in poor neighborhoods and are criminals as well; they are in jail.”

Through a variety of widely accepted stereotypes, the presumed cultural and intellectual inferiority of black and indigenous peoples in Peru is used to justify their low position in the social hierarchy. Since cultural racism is very much ingrained in Peruvian society, expressions of cultural racism are often not perceived to be racism at all, but simply to be factual statements. Thus, Peru has its own brand of cultural racism.

Source: Golash-Boza 2010.

it allows racial inequality to persist. We will explore this point further in the next section.

COLOR-BLIND RACISM

Sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva has built on these ideas of cultural racism and color-blind universalism to offer a framework for understanding how widespread racial inequality persists, even though no one wants to be called a racist. In his work, Bonilla-Silva (2013) presents the notion of color-blind racism, a racial ideology that explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics, such as market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, or cultural differences. This racial ideology ignores or marginalizes people of color's distinctive needs, experiences, and identities. Bonilla-Silva (2013) argues that although race is a social construction, the idea of race is real in a social sense and has produced a racial structure that systematically privileges whites.

Four Types of Color-Blind Racism

How is it possible to have widespread racial inequality when most whites claim there is no racism and that they are not racist? Bonilla-Silva offers an explanation in his book *Racism Without Racists*. His research team interviewed whites and asked them questions about their views on race in the United States. He found that whites use four types, or “frames,” of color-blind racism to justify and reproduce racial inequality.

Bonilla-Silva calls the first frame **abstract liberalism**. This frame involves using liberal ideas such as equality of opportunity or freedom of choice to explain or justify racial inequality. For example, when presented with the fact that African Americans still live in underserved, poorer neighborhoods, a person using this frame would explain this inequality by saying it is a choice. As the argument goes, nothing prevents people living in poorer neighborhoods from leaving, so their situation is not because of racism but because of individual choices. This response, however, ignores the structural factors that both created segregation and perpetuate it.

The second frame is **naturalization**. This frame permits people to explain racial phenomena as if they were natural. The explanation for segregation would be that people like to be around others who are like them. Again, the thinking is that segregation is not because of structural factors, but because it's normal or natural.

The third frame is **cultural racism**. This frame relies on culturally based explanations, such as the idea that blacks live in poor neighborhoods because

abstract liberalism The first of Bonilla-Silva's “frames” of color-blind racism. It involves using liberal ideas such as equality of opportunity or freedom of choice to explain or justify racial inequality.

naturalization The second “frame” of color-blind racism, which permits people to explain racial phenomena as if they were natural.

cultural racism (Bonilla-Silva) The third of Bonilla-Silva's “frames” of color-blind racism, relying on culturally based explanations such as the idea that blacks live in poor neighborhoods because they don't work hard enough to get out of the ghetto.

minimization of racism The fourth “frame” of color-blind racism, suggesting that discrimination is no longer a central factor affecting life chances for people of color.

rhetorical strategy Way of expressing racist ideas without being labeled as racist.

they don’t work hard enough to get out of the ghetto. A person can use cultural racism by saying something along the lines of, “Blacks like Barack Obama who work hard get ahead, yet most blacks can’t get out of the ghetto because they are too lazy to find work.” Statements like these ignore the fact that high unemployment rates among black men in urban areas are due to a host of structural factors that make it extraordinarily difficult for them to obtain employment, as discussed in Chapter Nine.

The fourth and final frame is **minimization of racism**. This frame suggests that discrimination is no longer a central factor affecting life chances for people of color. When confronted with facts indicating that racism is a real problem in society, those who use this frame would respond with comments such as “racism rarely happens” or “most employers are not racist.”

Rhetorical Strategies of Color-Blind Racism

In addition to the frames mentioned in the last section, Bonilla-Silva found that whites used specific **rhetorical strategies**, or ways of expressing racist ideas without being labeled as racists. Bonilla-Silva argues that because post-civil rights racial norms do not permit the open expression of racial views, whites have developed concealed ways of voicing them.

As Bonilla-Silva found, one common rhetorical strategy is to preface discriminatory claims with “I am not a racist, but. . . .” Alternatively, whites would say, “Some of my best friends are black, but. . . .” For example, when asked if they would mind if their daughter married a black man, a white person would respond, “I am not a racist, but I don’t think interracial marriages work.” Or they might use another rhetorical strategy called projection, according to which they would respond: “I don’t mind if my daughter marries a black man, but you have to think about the children.” These rhetorical strategies allow whites to indirectly express discriminatory or prejudiced ideas.

In his research, Bonilla-Silva found that people use color-blind racial ideology in everyday speech patterns to *justify* racial inequality. This ideology influences rhetorical strategies, stories, and customary behaviors that allow whites to explain why racial inequality is not due to racism. In addition to justifying racial inequality, color-blind racism *reproduces* racial inequality by permitting people to engage in discriminatory actions without being labeled as racists.

THE NEW POLITICS OF RACE

As we have seen throughout this chapter, racial ideologies constantly change and adapt but do not disappear. Over the course of the twentieth century, they evolved from biological racism to cultural racism to color-blind universalism

and color-blind racism. In each instance, these ideologies worked to justify and explain racial inequality. The malleability of racial ideologies permits them to evolve as society does.

Barack Obama became the first black president of the United States after winning the 2008 election. In 2016, Donald Trump was elected to the presidency on a platform that galvanized white supremacists—the number of hate crimes in 2016 hit an all-time high (Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, 2017). Let's take a closer look at these two historic elections to evaluate what has changed and what has not.

What did Obama's election reveal about racial ideologies? It did not signal the end of racism in the United States, despite what some commentators claimed. Did it mean that white Americans were able to see past race, or did Americans embrace his blackness?

Sociologist Enid Logan (2011) contends that Obama won the 2008 election because he was able to shape an image of blackness that was palatable to a broad cross section of Americans. This strategy required Obama to distance himself from African American leaders such as Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, and Jeremiah White (Logan 2011; Nopper 2011). Obama's ability to claim this particular form of blackness was crucial to his success. As a presidential candidate, Obama had to walk a fine line—one where he neither rejected blackness, thus alienating African Americans, nor claimed blackness too blatantly, thus alienating white voters. Sociologists Adia Harvey Wingfield and Joe Feagin



< Inauguration Day, 2017. Whereas Obama sought racial conciliation, Trump campaigned using messages that were at times overtly racist.

(2010) argue that Obama’s marriage to African American Michelle Obama was critical for his acceptance among African Americans: it permitted him to claim blackness through his marriage while he simultaneously emphasized his biracial status.

Racial politics undoubtedly played a significant role in Obama’s election to the presidency. But the election of a black president should not be taken as an example of how America had moved beyond race. Instead, it showed the continuing importance and evolution of racial ideologies. Obama was able to become president not because we were living in a postracial society, but because he distanced himself just enough from his blackness.

One way Obama leveraged race was by using color-blind universalism to move his agenda forward. For example, Obama did not favor programs directed at alleviating black male inner-city unemployment, even though black unemployment rates have consistently been double that of whites (Taylor 2016). Instead, he advocated for job recovery programs that would help all Americans. Table 3-1 uses the example of black unemployment rates to show how racial ideologies affect our approaches to social problems. Obama rejected biological and cultural racism, while embracing color-blind universalism.

Whereas Obama sought racial conciliation, Donald Trump campaigned, using messages that were at times overtly racist, on a promise to “make America great again.” Trump appealed primarily to blue-collar whites frustrated with the lack of economic progress in the United States, as well as to others frustrated with the state of politics in the country. Supporters of the

TABLE 3-1		
Ideological Explanations for Higher Unemployment Rates Among African Americans		
Racial Ideology	Argument	Solution
Biological racism	African American men are genetically inferior to whites and thus have trouble getting and keeping jobs.	Do nothing. Let natural selection prevail.
Cultural racism	African American men are unemployed because they are unable to present themselves appropriately to employers.	Teach African American men appropriate demeanors.
Color-blind universalism	The disparity exists, but the solution is to improve the overall economy, not to focus on African Americans specifically.	Implement universal solutions that do not target one racial group.

alt-right—a far right-wing white supremacist movement—found Trump’s messaging particularly appealing. Trump redirected white Americans’ fears of economic insecurity to fears of terrorism and immigrants. He also used thinly veiled racial rhetoric, although he has denied he is racist and has said that he has a “great relationship with the blacks” (O’Connor and Marans 2016).

We can use Table 3-1 to consider how Trump’s ideology differs from Obama’s. One of the most egregious types of racism is biological racism—the idea that whites are genetically superior to nonwhites. Donald Trump is reported to have said that “laziness is a trait in blacks. It really is, I believe that. It’s not anything they can control” (O’Donnell and Rutherford 2016). The idea that black people are innately lazier than other races is a clear example of biological racism.

Another, more common form of racism is cultural racism, which involves the belief that a particular racial or ethnic culture can inhibit or promote success. Trump has also made statements in line with this thinking. He stereotyped Jewish people as good negotiators (O’Connor and Marans 2016). He referred to Mexican immigrants generally as rapists and other criminals (Ye He Lee 2015). The ideas that Jewish people are characteristically good at business and that Mexicans are criminally inclined because of their culture are clear examples of cultural racism.

Trump has also demonstrated subtler applications of this ideology. In an interview regarding the Trump University fraud lawsuits, he stated that the U.S. District Judge Gonzalo Curiel had a conflict of interest because he was of “Mexican heritage” (Kendall 2016). Trump had made policy proposals that would limit immigration, but the idea that a Latino judge is necessarily pro-immigration is an example of cultural racism. Based on the judge’s ethnic background, Trump presumed to know his political beliefs.

From Presidents Clinton to Bush to Obama to Trump, racial inequality has persisted. The specificities have fluctuated, but the overall picture has changed relatively little. Racial inequality is deeply embedded in the fabric of our nation and, by extension, in its politics.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Reading the stories of Japanese internees and of violence against African Americans in the Jim Crow South, we cannot deny that we have come a long way. However, today there are more African American men in prison or jail or on probation or parole than were enslaved in 1850 (Alexander 2010). In this light, the trajectory toward racial justice does not seem so straightforward.

Signs that say “No Dogs, Negroes, or Mexicans” are no longer displayed prominently in storefronts, nor are there designations for “Coloreds” and “Whites Only” at water fountains. Instead, we usually see more subtle indications of continued racism through statements such as “I’m not a racist, but. . . .” And we see the open denigration of other groups. For example, during the U.S. presidential campaign, Donald Trump stated: “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. . . . They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists.” (Moreno 2015). Here, Trump qualifies his statement by saying that some Mexican immigrants are “good people,” but the message is clear: he believes that many of them are not.

The discourses have changed, as have the outcomes. In our society, calling someone a racist is a serious insult. However, a racial ideology that upholds the superiority of whites and ensures that whites have access to the best resources persists. This is the paradox of racism in the post–civil rights era.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

hegemony 66
 prejudice 66
 discrimination 66
 racial ideology 66
 color-blind racism 66
 stereotype 66
 Black Lives Matter 69
 segregation 70

Jim Crow laws 70
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3.1 How do racial ideologies both persist and change? (pp. 66–70)

- Racial ideologies in the United States have since evolved over time, from primarily a folk concept in the eighteenth century to a pseudoscientific concept in the nineteenth century to color-blind ideology today.

Review

- » What is the difference between prejudice and discrimination?
- » What are racial ideologies, and how have they changed over time in the United States?
- » How is the killing of Trayvon Martin connected to that of Emmett Till?

Critical Thinking

- » How have racial ideologies become hegemonic, and what does that mean?
- » Why do racial ideologies shift over time?

3.2 In what ways was 1920 to 1965 an era of overt racism? (pp. 70–76)

- The early to mid-twentieth century in the United States was the setting for many cases of egregious racism, including segregation, the mass deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the Tuskegee syphilis experiment.

Review

- » What were the Jim Crow laws?
- » What was the motivation for the mass deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the mid-twentieth century?
- » Why were Japanese Americans interned during World War II?
- » What was the Tuskegee syphilis experiment?

Critical Thinking

- » What are contemporary parallels to the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, the mass deportation of Mexicans in the 1930s, and the internment of Japanese Americans? What has changed, and what has not?
- » It is difficult to imagine that the United States would reenact the mass internment of Japanese and Japanese Americans. However, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, U.S. government officials interrogated thousands of people from the Middle East. Do you think there are parallels between the internment of Japanese during World War II and the interrogation of Middle Easterners after September 11? Do you think racial ideologies were at play in either instance? Why or why not?

3.3 What role did the civil rights movement play in promoting change? (pp. 76–80)

- During much of the 1950s and 1960s, African Americans and others in the United States rallied together to demand civil rights. Landmark events include the Montgomery bus boycott, sit-ins, and the Freedom Rides.

Review

- » How were the Jim Crow laws dismantled?
- » Who was Rosa Parks?
- » Who were the Freedom Riders?

Critical Thinking

- » Which strategies of the civil rights movement were most successful? Why?

3.4 What are some of the forms that racism takes today? (pp. 80–85)

- Since the era of the civil rights movement, racism has continued to plague our society. It has changed over time, however, so that today we more often see examples of cultural racism than biological racism.
- Color-blind universalism has become pervasive, allowing racial inequality to persist.

Review

- » What are some ways that racial ideologies have evolved since the 1960s?
- » What is the difference between old and new racism?
- » What is the difference between biological and cultural racism?
- » What is color-blind universalism?

Critical Thinking

- » Provide an example from an encounter or conversation you have had with someone that is indicative of biological racism, cultural racism, or color-blind universalism.

3.5 What is color-blind racism, and how does it perpetuate inequality? (pp. 85–86)

- Color-blind racism involves four types, or “frames,” according to sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism.
- This racial ideology ignores or marginalizes the distinctive needs, experiences, and identities of people of color.

Review

- » What is an example of each frame of color-blind racism?

Critical Thinking

- » Explain in concrete terms how whites use a frame, in Bonilla-Silva’s terms, to justify and reproduce racial inequality. Use a specific example from the readings, your personal experiences, or your service learning experiences to demonstrate the frame.

3.6 What did the elections of Presidents Obama and Trump reveal about racial ideologies in the United States? (pp. 86–89)

- The election of Barack Obama to the presidency changed racial dynamics in the United States, yet racism still persists.
- The election of Donald Trump galvanized white supremacists.

Review

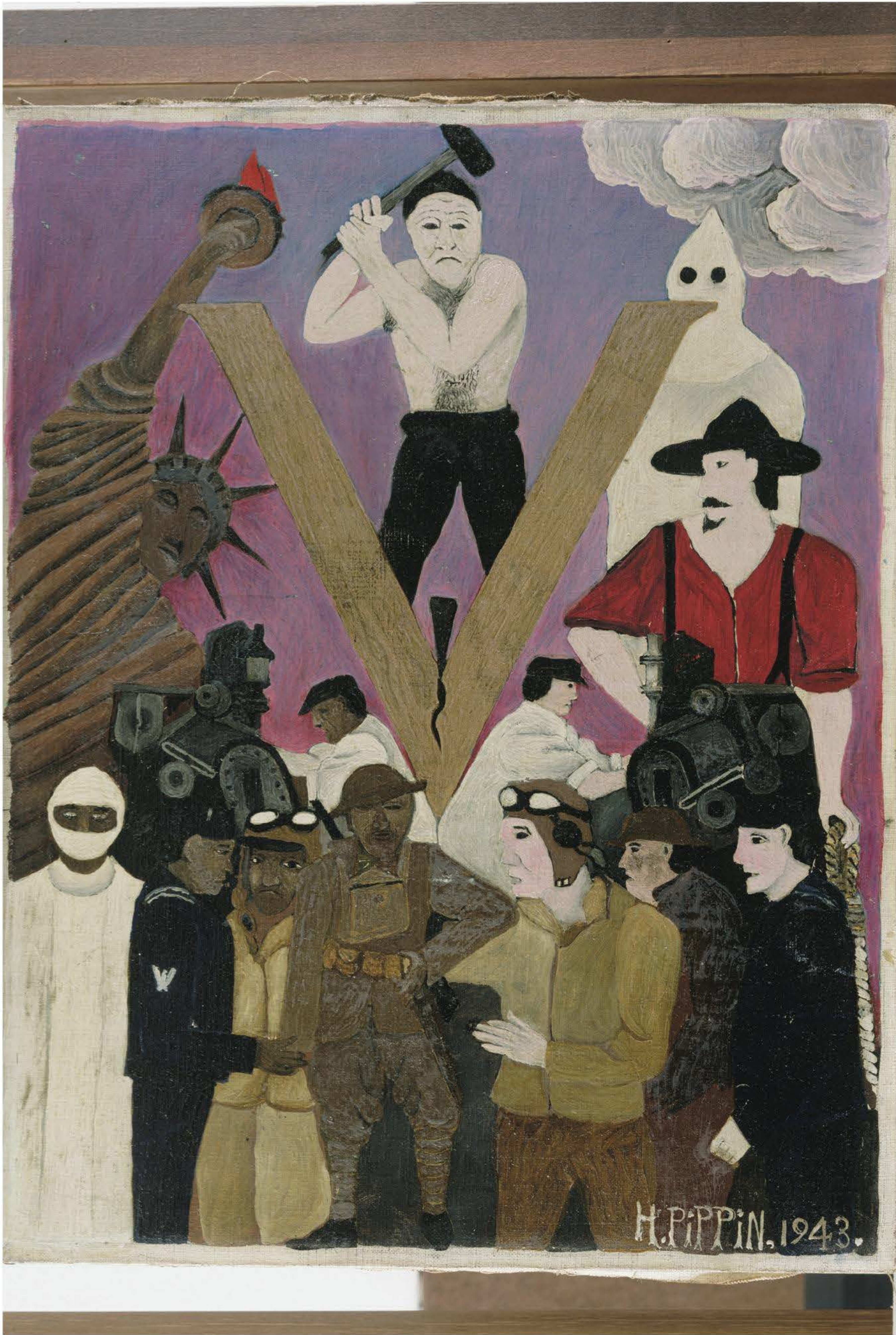
- » How did Obama's blackness play a role in his political career?
- » Who found Trump's message compelling?

Critical Thinking and Discussion

- » How have racial dynamics changed in the United States between the Obama and Trump presidencies?

Talking about Race

Have you ever heard someone say “racism is a thing of the past”? If that statement were to come up in conversation, what have you learned from this chapter that might help you counter the idea that racial inequality or racial discrimination has gone away? In what ways is the current era unique? What are some parallels between today and one hundred years ago, and how far have we come as a country?



Mr. Prejudice. Horace Pippin. 1943. Oil on canvas, 18-1/8 × 14-1/8 in. (*The Philadelphia Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY*)

Sociological Theories of Race and Racism

As You Read

- 4.1 How is individual racism linked to institutional inequality?
- 4.2 What are the key similarities and differences between systemic racism and structural racism?
- 4.3 What is racial formation, and how does this concept inform our understanding of racial inequality?
- 4.4 What does the perspective of indigenous studies reveal about racism in the United States today?
- 4.5 How is Islamophobia related to racism?
- 4.6 In what ways do race, class, and gender oppression work together?

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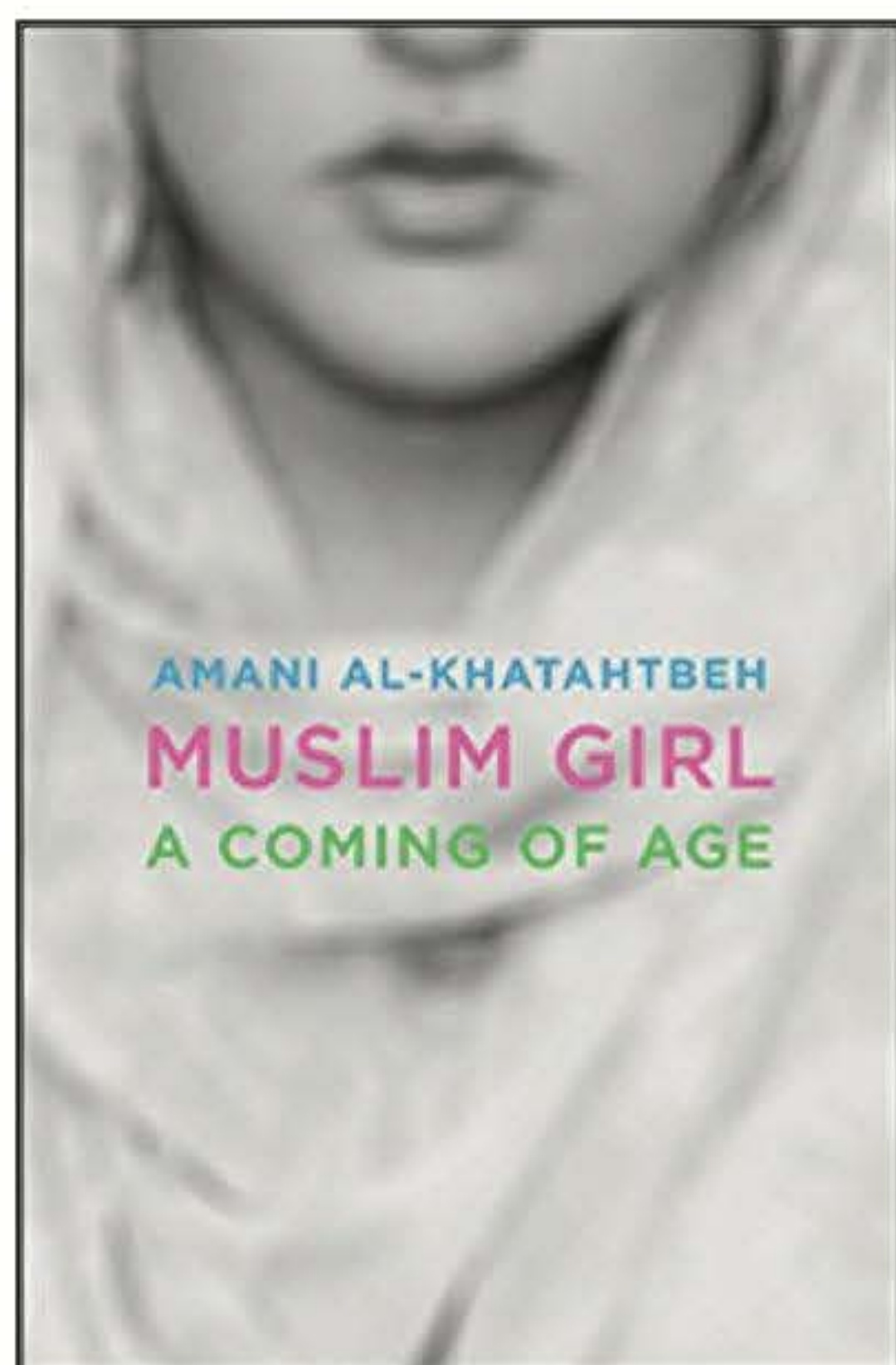
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Amani Al-Khatahtbeh is a Muslim woman who grew up in New Jersey. She was eleven years old in September 2001 when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. That was the same year Amani heard her first racial slur. Another student said to her: “Your people throw rocks at tanks.” Amani learned at a young age that she would be judged not only on her own merits, but on those of her “people.” The September 2001 attacks (known as 9/11) would have lasting implications for Amani, her family, and her community, as she explains in the following excerpt. Amani also describes how she feels about the election of Donald Trump to the presidency, in light of his calls to ban Muslims from the United States.

I’m not really sure I understood what was going on when 9/11 happened, but I was old enough to feel the world shift on its axis that day and change everything forever. I remember it so vividly because it was confusing and chaotic, and the first time since my grandfather from Jordan passed away that I was enveloped by sadness all around me, yet this time it applied to everyone. That day has become crystallized in my memory not just for how harrowingly scary it was—how we didn’t know what would come after that—but also because I deeply believe that my generation of millennial Muslims has, whether we like it or not, come to be defined by it.

We have become commodified in every demeaning way: Our bodies have become political targets in the service of returning America to the imaginary greatness it once enjoyed, which I can only assume was during the days of outright racial comfort and superiority of white people; at the same time, our bodies have been reprinted, sold, contorted to fit the only cool narrative society can accept, sold to us Muslim women in a way that makes us eagerly jump to celebrate the shattering of another glass ceiling.

...

Abed Ayoub, legal director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, issued a statement in the winter of 2015, almost immediately after Donald Trump’s call for a ban on Muslim immigration, stating that levels of Islamophobia at that time were the worst they had witnessed since immediately after 9/11. My heart hurt. I could not imagine a generation of little girls living through a Trump era—the

terrifying possibility of a Trump generation—and enduring the same unsettlement that my friends and I did growing up, not just from navigating their own identities, but their surroundings as well. Enough is enough. The cycle needs to stop. In this case, it's less of a cycle and more of an uphill battle in which we toil. We're climbing toward the light with exceptional weight on our backs, digging our heels into the dirt of the past to gain our way to the top, only to slip—no, be completely knocked down—by an uncontrollable, newly emerging force that causes us to tumble all the way back to where we started, much to the jeers and cheers and additional trips of the bystanders around us. Everyone can see it happen, and complacency is a killer.

Source: Al-Khatahtbeh 2016, 3–4.

Above, Amani Al-Khatahtbeh describes the significance for her community of both 9/11 and the Trump presidency. Muslim Americans became hypervisible after 9/11, as anti-Muslim sentiment grew (Salaita 2006). The discrimination that Muslim Americans face is just one manifestation of deeply embedded racism in our society.

Racial discrimination is pervasive in the contemporary United States. We see it in the criminal justice system, where blacks and Latinos are several times more likely to go to prison than whites (Gottschalk 2015). We can find racial inequality in employment as well: audit studies have shown that blacks are less likely than whites to be interviewed and, once interviewed, to get a job. Once blacks have jobs, they are less likely to be promoted. Black business owners have more trouble obtaining contracts. In education, the picture is equally bleak. Many schools in the United States are racially segregated, and the quality of education is lower at primarily black and Latino schools. Within schools, white students are given preferential treatment. When white parents visit schools, they receive more attention from staff members, and teachers are more likely to recommend white students for gifted programs (Nicholson-Crotty et al. 2016). Sociologists and other researchers have carried out study upon study demonstrating that inequality and discrimination exist. Yet how do we explain it? This is where **sociological theories of racism** come into play. Sociologists use evidence from their studies to develop explanations for how racial inequality is created and reproduced. These explanations are known as *theories*.

Sociological theories in the field of racial and ethnic relations look both at how racism works (Bonilla-Silva 1997, 2013; Feagin 2001) and at how

sociological theories of racism Sociological explanations for how racial inequality is created and reproduced.

people are racialized (Omi and Winant 1994; Cornell and Hartmann 2007). In this chapter, we will look at several sociological theories of race and racism to help us understand how people are categorized into racial groups and the consequences of those categorizations. Before we begin an examination of these theories, what do you think? How would you explain the fact that black men are seven times more likely to go to prison than white men? Do you think blacks commit more crimes? Do you think police officers spend more time policing black communities? Do you think police officers are biased toward African Americans? All of these hypotheses can be tested through scientific studies. Together, these hypotheses about how racism works lead to theories of racism that help us understand how our society operates.

INDIVIDUAL RACISM AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Racism includes both discrimination and prejudice. As we discussed in Chapter Three, racial discrimination involves practices or actions that reproduce racial inequality, and racial prejudice refers to racially biased beliefs. For example, an employer can think African Americans are less competent than whites—this belief constitutes racial prejudice. When that employer decides to hire a white person instead of an equally qualified black person, that decision may be considered racial discrimination. Both prejudice and discrimination are widespread in U.S. society.

Many Americans, even those who do not believe they are racially prejudiced, have implicit biases that operate at the level of the subconscious. It is hard to avoid these biases because of the barrage of racialized messages we receive in the media and through our personal networks. Racial prejudice and implicit biases inevitably lead to racial discrimination. (Curious about your own implicit bias? Take the Implicit Association Test at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>.)

Individual Racism

Discrimination can occur at the individual level when one person discriminates against another. Audit studies have consistently shown that blacks are less likely to be interviewed for jobs than whites and that blacks and Latinos face housing discrimination on a regular basis (Feagin 2001; Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009). Racially discriminatory actions by individuals such as not calling back an interviewee for a job because of his race or telling a person on the phone that the apartment is taken because he or she has a Spanish accent or lives on a reservation constitute **individual racism**. Individual acts

individual racism When one person discriminates against another on the basis of race or ethnicity.

of racial discrimination and bigotry are commonplace in our society and help to reproduce racial inequalities.

How widespread is individual racism? Researchers have consistently found that racial discrimination is pervasive. One study of Department of Defense employees revealed that nearly half of the black employees had heard racist jokes in the previous year (Feagin 2001). Another survey conducted by Feagin and McKinney (2003) revealed that 80 percent of black respondents had encountered racial hostility in public places. One African American secretary detailed the consequences of constant discrimination as follows: “I had to see several doctors because of the discrimination, and I went through a lot of stress. And, then, my blood pressure . . . went on the rise” (82). This woman, like many other African Americans interviewed in this study, displayed high levels of stress as a result of her mistreatment in the workplace and consequently developed health issues. In another study, Dwanna Robertson (2015) found that Native Americans constantly face the consequences of negative stereotypes about them. One of her participants told her, “I hear things like: ‘Show me an Indian, I’ll show you a drunk Indian.’ ‘Indians are lazy’” (130).

It is remarkable that individual racism is widespread in a society that usually condemns overt acts of racism. If a television announcer were to make a racially charged or overtly racist statement such as “African Americans are inherently more violent than whites,” we can be sure that the following day, critics would forcefully condemn the racist statement. If racial discrimination is frowned upon, how can it be so widespread?

One way that individual racism persists, even in a society that decries racism, is through **racial microaggressions**—daily, commonplace insults and racial slights that cumulatively affect the psychological well-being of people of color. The consequences of these microaggressions can be severe, and studies of African Americans, Latinos, and Asians have uncovered the continued prevalence of microaggressions. One study of African Americans on college campuses, for example, found that white students and professors consistently doubted the academic potential of African Americans. One black student was presumed to have cheated after getting an “A” on a difficult math quiz. Another black student found that people assumed his scholarship was for sports, when, in fact, it was for his academic achievements. These students reported that the cumulative effect of these slights was to make them tired, discouraged, and frustrated—especially since they had expected more from their professors and peers (Solorzano, Ceja, and Yasso 2000). These microaggressions can have severe consequences: a recent study among African American college

racial microaggression

Daily, commonplace insults and racial slights that cumulatively affect the psychological well-being of people of color.

students found that certain types of racial microaggressions were associated with elevated levels of suicide ideation (Hollingsworth et al. 2016).

African Americans are not the only group to experience microaggressions. In a study of Asian Americans' experiences of discrimination, Derald Wing Sue and his colleagues found that Asian Americans experienced a wide variety of microaggressions, ranging from the assumption of foreignness to exoticization of Asian women to invisibility. For example, Asian Americans reported that white Americans consistently asked them questions such as "Where are you from?" or made comments such as "You speak good English," when the only indication that they might not be from the United States was their Asian appearance. Other Asian Americans pointed out that people presumed they were good at math and that men presumed Asian women would be submissive lovers. Asian Americans also reported that people presumed that they didn't face discrimination. The Asian Americans in this study recounted that the constant barrage of microaggressions angered them but that they also felt disempowered to respond, as any single event could seem inconsequential by itself (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, and Torino 2007). These experiences are commonplace: a recent study of 152 Asian Americans found that 78 percent of them experienced microaggressions during a two-week period (Ong, Burrow, Fuller-Rowell, Ja, and Sue 2013).

Kevin Nadal and his colleagues conducted a study of multiracial people's experiences of microaggressions and found them to be pervasive (Nadal et al. 2011). These studies of both Asian Americans and multiracial individuals reveal that well-intentioned whites often deliver microaggressions because of their insensitivity toward and ignorance about nonwhites. This can be seen, for example, when a white person speaks Japanese to a Chinese American or tells a biracial woman with a black mother and a white father that being half-white makes it easier to get along with her. In the first instance, the white person may be trying to show a cultural interest in Asian people, although her act simultaneously tries to erase the differences between Japanese and Chinese people and reasserts the presumed foreignness of Asian Americans. In the second instance, this assertion reinforces white supremacy by implying that the biracial woman is better than other blacks because she has a white parent.

Microaggressions and other forms of individual racism continue to pose a problem on college campuses. Studies have consistently found that individual acts of bigotry are commonplace (Harper and Hurtado 2007). In a recent study (Harper et al. 2011), higher education researchers interviewed fifty-two African American male resident assistants (RAs) on five college campuses and found that many of the participants reported that supervisors and fellow

Microaggressions

Individuals who have had the following experiences and consider them to be racial microaggressions posted these reports on the website microaggressions.com. How do you feel as you read these reports? What would you say if you overheard such comments? What would you say if someone directed one of these comments at you?

Often when I have dinner at people's houses, they ask me if I would prefer chopsticks, regardless of the meal!

I am a registered nurse and always get told that I speak English so well. I was born in Australia and I am of Filipino background. I don't think about my appearance until a patient or their family member points it out, and they are quite amazed/baffled that someone who appears Asian "speaks so well" and could be considered a "real Australian."

I always get asked to be an interpreter for patients who are not native English speakers, specifically for those of Asian background. Because I am of Asian background as well, there is this assumption that I speak every language in Asia or that there is only one language/country in Asia. Unbelievable.

"Sorry, that must be my black coming out." [Said by] my biracial friend (African American and Mexican). Whenever she does or says something negative she blames it on the "Black" side of her. Makes me feel angry, belittled, resentful.

I express that my brother attends a private university. Immediately a girl in the car responds in a very sure voice "Oh, he plays football?" This is the second time this has happened. As if a young black male can only attend a prestigious private college on a football scholarship.

"You're really unintimidating for a black guy." Said by white male. I am a freshman in college. Made me feel as though I should be intimidating because I'm black.

Ohmygawd. You're totally not what people think of when they think of Muslim women. You're so cool.

Wow. Don't get the Muslim mad, guys. We don't want a blown-up school tomorrow.



The presumption that Asian Americans use chopsticks at every meal is based on an idea of inherent cultural differences. We don't see these same presumptions applied to third-generation Italian Americans or Irish Americans.

Voices

(continued)



Continued

Substitute teacher: Quiet down! You're acting like a bunch of wild Indians!

Oh, but you're Latin, so you must love the heat! While discussing the summer weather. I'm from Bogotá—the average temperature is 60°F. I feel like nobody in the States bothers to understand that Latinos are not just one monolithic entity.

Source: The Microaggressions Project.

students consistently doubted their competence and stereotyped them as potential thugs or gangsters. The frequency of individual acts of racism on college campuses has led a number of scholars to argue that many primarily white campuses have hostile climates that are not conducive to learning for nonwhite students (Harper and Hurtado 2007). These issues came to a head at the University of Missouri amid a series of overtly racist incidents beginning in 2014. In April that year, freshman Bradley Becker inscribed a swastika and the word “heil” on a dormitory wall. In September, a group of young people near campus yelled the N-word at the student body president. When the administration did not respond to these incidents in a meaningful way, black students and allies organized and demanded the president's resignation. As student protests mounted, racist incidents continued, including another swastika drawing. Finally, following the football team's threatened boycott, President Tim Wolfe resigned in November 2015 (Izadi 2015).

Institutional Racism

In the late 1960s and 1970s, sociological thinking on racism moved away from a focus solely on prejudice and individual acts of racism toward an institutional approach. Carmichael and Hamilton (1967) introduced the idea of **institutional racism**—the policies, laws, and institutions that reproduce racial inequalities—in their book *Black Power*. They explained that the high rates of black infant mortality in Birmingham, Alabama, and the prevalence of black families in slums are best understood through an analysis of institutional racism.

In an essay published in 1979, Carol Camp Yeakey posited that research on institutional racism in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s represented a marked departure from previous research, which had not focused on “the attributes of the majority group and the institutional mechanisms by which majority and minority relations are created, sustained, and changed”

institutional racism

Policies, laws, and institutions that reproduce racial inequalities.

Microaggressions in Peru

Monica Carrillo Zegarra is an Afro-Peruvian artist, scholar, and activist. She finished university in Peru and then went on to Oxford to complete a degree in human rights. In Peru, she founded an organization called LUNDU, which organizes and empowers Afro-Peruvian youth.

Monica describes what happened to her on one not untypical evening in Lima, Peru. On New Year's Eve 2006, she left her home in a middle-class neighborhood in Lima to go shopping and had the following interactions:

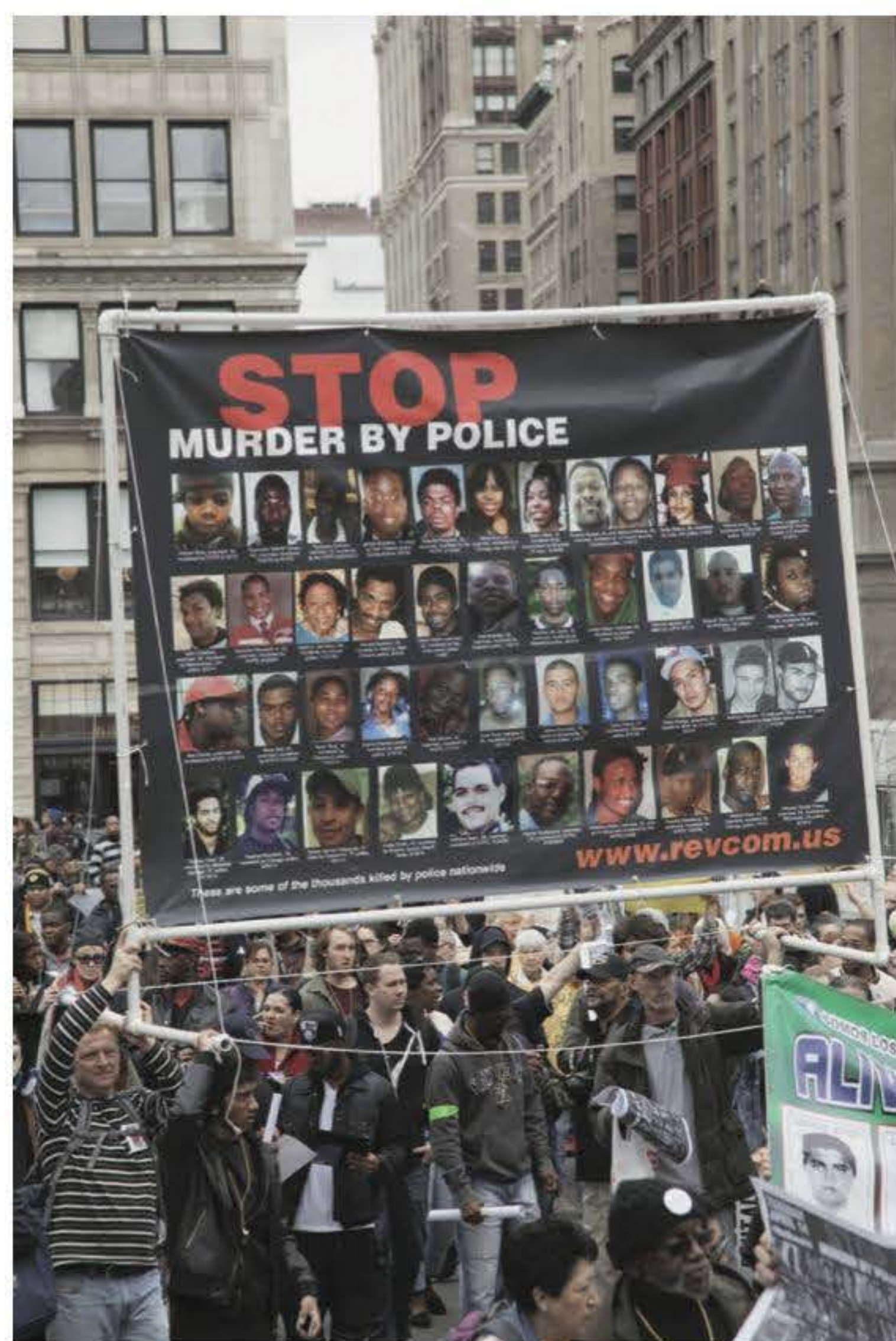
- 5 p.m.: A man walking down the street holding his five-year-old son's hand points at Monica and says, "Monster, monster. Do you see the monster?" The boy laughs and responds, "Daddy, she is burned."
- 6:05 p.m.: Monica walks toward an outdoor market where women are selling earrings. The women begin to laugh. One of them says: "There goes your sister." The other responds: "Are you crazy; she's your sister." And they all laugh.
- 6:10 p.m.: Monica is walking down the street, and a taxi driver begins to follow her. He opens the door and says, "Negra: get in." When she responds defensively, he says: "You should be happy I am looking at a woman like you."

In her essay, Monica continues to describe the microaggressions she consistently experiences. Men and women, girls and boys, shout "negra" at her when she leaves the house. Men presume she is sexually available and offer unsolicited invitations for sexual intimacy. On one occasion, within just thirty minutes, Monica counts eleven people who verbally assault her as she walks down the street. Monica explains that racial aggressions are commonplace in Peru because Peruvians feel as if they can hurl insults at Afro-Peruvians with impunity. As an artist and activist, she struggles with the best ways to confront this reality and to maintain a sense of humanity in the face of constant dehumanization.

Source: Carrillo Zegarra 2010.



Monica Carrillo gathering signatures in the 2012 campaign "Sign up against racism" in Peru.



▲ Protestors calling for the end of police brutality march through New York in 2015. Young black men are 21 times more likely than young white men to be killed by police.

(Yeakey 1979, 200). Yeakey then argued that racism operates on both a covert and an overt level and takes two related forms: “The first is on an individual level. The second is on an institutional level where racism as a normative, societal ideology operates within and among the organizations, institutions, and processes of the larger society. And the overt acts of individual racism and the more covert acts of institutional racism have a mutually reinforcing effect” (200).

Understanding the framework of institutional racism is essential for understanding racism in the United States, as racism amounts to more than individual acts of discrimination. An individual police officer may have prejudicial beliefs that blacks are more likely to be violent than whites. Based on this prejudice, the officer may be more likely to racially discriminate against blacks and more likely to use more physical force against blacks than whites. What do we call it, though, when this kind of discrimination happens repeatedly? An analysis of the 1,217 U.S. police shootings between 2010 and 2012 found that young black males are 21 times more likely to be killed by police than are their white counterparts (Gabrielson, Grochowski Jones, and Sagara 2014). How do we explain this statistic?

In overwhelmingly black neighborhoods in Washington, D.C., and Chicago, nearly three-quarters of black men have been incarcerated. In some states, black men go to jail on drug charges at fifty times the rate of white men. In seven states, blacks constitute over 80 percent of drug offenders sent to prison (Alexander 2010). These extraordinary disparities cannot be explained by individual acts of discrimination alone.

Instead, it makes sense to argue that racial discrimination has become institutionalized in the criminal justice system. This is because racial discrimination happens at every level of this system. The laws are written in ways that discriminate against blacks—the disparities in sentences for possession of crack and possession of cocaine are one example (Alexander 2010). Police officers are consistently more likely to pull over and arrest black men than they are white men. Blacks are more likely to get harsher sentences or even the death penalty (Gottschalk 2015). When we look at the system as a whole and see that the criminal justice apparatus more harshly affects blacks than whites, and when we can see that racial discrimination is consistent and systematic, we can say that the criminal justice system is a prime example of institutional racism. Institutional racism also exists in other institutions, including the educational system, housing, and the labor market.

SYSTEMIC RACISM AND STRUCTURAL RACISM

Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton (1967) developed the idea of institutional racism in the 1970s. Since that time, many thinkers have enhanced their conceptual models and developed more complex and integrative ways of thinking about institutional racism. In 1969, Samuel Robert Friedman (1969, 20) defined structural racism as a “pattern of action in which one or more of the institutions of society has the power to throw on more burdens and give less benefits to the members of one race than another on an on-going basis.” In 1979, Carol Camp Yeakey wrote about “the interrelated and cumulative nature of systemic or institutional discrimination and racism,” the way racism works in “social systems” (203), and explained:

The resource allocation of city schools; residential segregation and housing quality; the location, structure, and placement of transport systems; hiring and promotion practices; academic underachievement of racial and ethnic minority youth; availability of decent health care; behavior of policemen and judges; a legal order that incarcerates more minorities than majorities; stereotypical images prevalent in the media and school curricula; price gouging in ghetto stores; morbidity, mortality, and longevity rates; lack of political clout and effective legislative representation—these and a myriad of other forms of social, political, and economic discrimination concurrently interlock to determine the status, welfare, and income of the racial and ethnic minorities of color.

Unfortunately, nearly forty years later, we can make the same assessment with regard to institutional racism. Fortunately, scholars of race and racism continue to refine these theories and approaches. In this section, we explore some of these current approaches.

Systemic Racism

Sociologist Joe Feagin defines **systemic racism** as “a diverse assortment of racist practices; the unjustly gained economic and political power of whites, the continuing resource inequalities; and the white-racist ideologies, attitudes, and institutions created to preserve white advantage and power” (2001, 16). He explains that systemic racism encompasses daily microaggressions, deep-seated inequalities, and anti-black ideologies. Taken together, systemic racism includes:

- Patterns of unjust impoverishment of nonwhites
- Vested group interests of whites to maintain racism

systemic racism As defined by Joe Feagin (2001), a diverse assortment of racist practices, encompassing daily microaggressions, deep-seated inequalities, and antiblack ideologies.

- Omnipresent and routinized discrimination against nonwhites
- The rationalization of racial oppression
- An imbalance of power whereby whites are able to reproduce inequality through control of major political and economic resources

Systemic racism theory gives primacy to history and to anti-blackness: Feagin explains that systemic racism exists because of the history of the United States as a slaveholding nation. Racial oppression was foundational to and is deeply ingrained in our nation's history. The legal system of the United States—based on the Constitution and Supreme Court cases—is rife with examples of entrenched racism. Systemic racism in history and the present day has created a “white racial frame” that shapes individuals and institutions in the United States. Feagin emphasizes that racism and racial inequality were created by whites and continue to be perpetuated by white individuals and white-owned institutions (2001).

The unjust enrichment of whites through slavery and privileged access to resources since the beginning of the United States is at the core of an understanding of systemic racism. This unjust enrichment has led to unjust impoverishment of African Americans. Past and continuing discrimination has created a situation in which African Americans have been denied resources many whites have come to take for granted, including good jobs, great schools, and nice neighborhoods (Feagin 2001; Feagin and McKinney 2003). The pervasiveness of everyday acts of discrimination, combined with a legacy of unequal distribution of resources throughout every aspect of U.S. society, constitutes systemic racism.

Structural Racism

Proponents of the idea of **structural racism** take a slightly different approach in their analysis of racial inequality. As we have seen, institutional racism focuses on practices within institutions, and systemic racism focuses on accumulated acts of racism across history and throughout one's lifetime. Structural racism differs by pointing to interinstitutional interactions across time and space. For example, racial inequality in housing leads to racial inequality in schooling, which in turns leads to racial inequality in the labor market. Across generations, this chain of events becomes a cycle because parents who are less well positioned in the labor market cannot afford housing in the better neighborhoods, which means that their children will be less likely to attend better schools. A structural understanding of racism underscores the “structural relationships that produce racialized outcomes” (powell 2008, 798). This emphasis

structural racism

Interinstitutional interactions across time and space that reproduce racial inequality.

research focus

Systemic Racism and Hurricane Katrina

The images broadcast on national television in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina made it clear that those hardest hit were African Americans. Images of poor, dark-skinned African Americans wading through floodwaters made their way into living rooms across the United States.

Sociologists Kristen Lavelle and Joe Feagin (2006) have responded to the questions many people asked after seeing these images: Why were poor blacks the primary victims of Hurricane Katrina? Was it because they were black or because they were poor? Lavelle and Feagin argue we must look at race and class simultaneously,

as they are inextricable. In New Orleans, and across the United States, race and class are intertwined because of a long history of institutionalized racism.

There are large numbers of African Americans in southern Louisiana because of the history of slavery in the United States—New Orleans was the principal slave market in the United States in the 1700s and 1800s. By 1840, there were over 23,000 slaves in New Orleans and about 20,000 free blacks. Although slavery ended in 1865, inequality persisted through “separate but equal” statutes. For nearly one hundred years, blacks in New Orleans were prevented by law from living in white neighborhoods and attending white schools. When schools were officially desegregated, most white families moved out of integrated school districts or sent their children to private schools. Black families were left with underfunded schools, diminished job opportunities, and limited choices for housing.

By the time Hurricane Katrina hit in the summer of 2005, two-thirds of the residents of New Orleans were black, and one-quarter of the city’s residents lived below the official poverty line. Forty percent of the black residents of the city earned less than the salary required to meet the poverty line, giving New



People wade through floodwaters on their way to the Superdome in New Orleans, Louisiana, looking for shelter in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

(continued)

Orleans the highest rate of black poverty in the country. When the hurricane hit, 60 percent of poor blacks lacked access to a car, making it difficult for them to follow evacuation orders. Only 17 percent of poor whites in the city did not have access to a car.

Lavelle and Feagin argue that “this unjust impoverishment takes place within a continuing framework of well-institutionalized racism” (13). They contend that we can best understand why the primary victims of Hurricane Katrina were black and poor when we consider the long history of institutionalized racism in the United States.

For Discussion

1. Is systemic racism a useful framework for understanding Hurricane Katrina? Why or why not?
2. Why do Lavelle and Feagin argue that race and class are inextricable?
3. Why do you think segregation persisted after laws that enforced segregation were overturned?
4. What evidence do Lavelle and Feagin provide for contemporary and historical systemic racism in New Orleans?

Source: Lavelle and Feagin 2006.

racialized social systems

Societies in which economic, political, social, and ideological benefits are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories.

on the relationships among structures of institutional inequality provides new insights into how racial inequality is reproduced across generations.

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva proposes the concept of **racialized social systems**. By this term, he means “societies in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories” (1997, 469). Bonilla-Silva places particular emphasis on racial hierarchies and points to how these hierarchies influence all social relations. Societies that have racialized social systems differentially allocate “economic, political, social, and even psychological rewards to groups along racial lines” (442). Bonilla-Silva’s framework reflects a structural racism perspective because he focuses on structures of inequality, hierarchies, and social relations and practices that reproduce and justify racial disparities.

Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro (2006) offer a keen analysis of the role of structural racism in reproducing wealth inequalities. They explain that wealth inequality “has been structured over many generations through the same

systemic barriers that have hampered blacks throughout their history in American society: slavery, Jim Crow, so-called *de jure* discrimination, and institutionalized racism” (12–13). Oliver and Shapiro (2006) point to three instances of structural inequalities that work together: (1) blacks’ transition from slavery to freedom without a material base, (2) the suburbanization of whites and the ghettoization of blacks, and (3) contemporary institutional racism in the lending and real estate markets. These three inequalities work together to create a situation in which the median net worth of one white household is 10 times that of a Hispanic or Latino household and 13 times that of a black household (Kochhar and Fry 2014) (Figure 4-1).

Oliver and Shapiro (2006) explain how laws and policies, even those that do not mention race, can still work to enhance racial inequality. Our tax policies provide one example. In the United States, capital gains are taxed at a lower rate than income, and tax deductions are offered for home mortgages. These policies are ostensibly designed to help the middle class and encourage economic growth. However, they provide many more advantages to whites than to blacks because blacks rarely have capital gains income, are less likely to own a home, and, when they do own a home, have houses that are worth less than whites’ houses (Shapiro 2004). These state policies work to widen the wealth gap between blacks and whites by providing advantages to those who are already wealthier and who are more likely to be white.

RACIAL FORMATION

As discussed in Chapter One, racial categories were created during the time of slavery, genocide, and colonialism. Nevertheless, we still use categories such as White, Black, Asian, Native American, and, more recently, Latino/a and Arab to make meaning of our social world. In Latin America, *mestizo* (white/Indian) and *mulato* (white/black) as well as other racialized categories continue to shape social life. One key aspect of racial categories is that they are flexible and can accommodate distinct social realities. The emergence of “Arab” and “Latino” as racialized categories in the United States is an example of how racial ideologies can evolve and change the racial structure itself.

Whereas analyses of structural and systemic racism focus on racism itself, Michael Omi and Howard Winant consider racial meanings (1994). They introduce the concept of **racial formation** to help us understand how racial

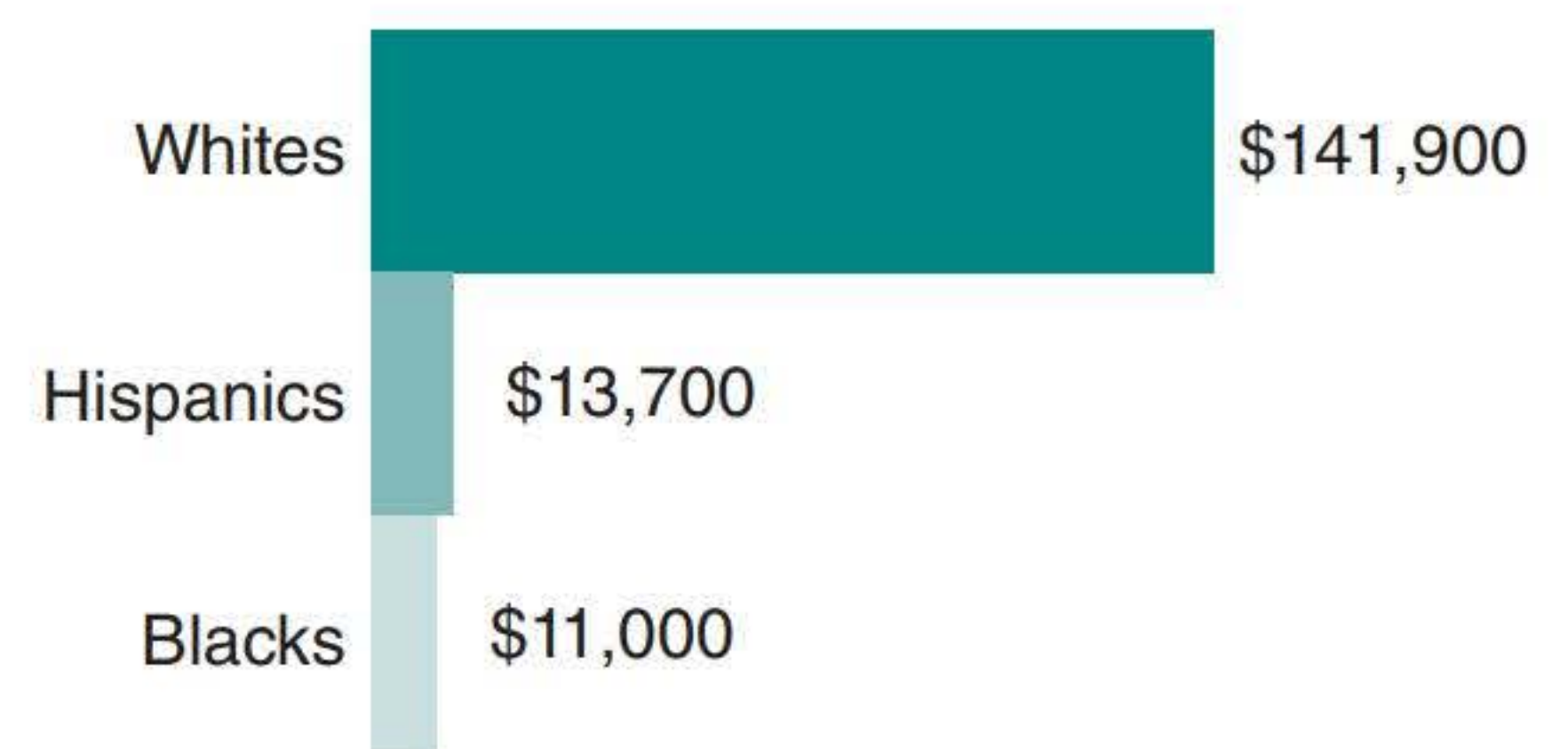


FIGURE 4-1.
Median net worth of white, Hispanic, and black households, 2014

Source: Pew Research Center (2014).

racial formation As defined by Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994), “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed.”

dynamics work in the United States. Omi and Winant define racial formation as “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed,” and as a “process or historically situated project” (56). They argue that the state (i.e., national government) is the primary site where race is constructed and contested. According to this theory, the state can reproduce or alleviate racial inequality through its institutions and policies. Omi and Winant explore “how concepts of race are created and changed” and argue that “concepts of race structure both state and civil society” (vii).

When Omi and Winant’s book was first published in 1986, it was a welcome change from earlier works that studied race as some variation of ethnicity, class, or nation. Instead, Omi and Winant presented race as a topic worthy of study in itself. Their groundbreaking work has greatly enhanced our understanding of how race works in the United States.

Omi and Winant (1994) draw from the Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci to argue that racial dynamics in the United States have changed from domination to hegemony. Domination refers to direct rule by coercion, whereas hegemony involves rule by both coercion and consent. For example, Omi and Winant contend that the United States prior to the civil rights era could be characterized as a racial dictatorship in which racial inequality was enforced through domination. During slavery and the Jim Crow era, white domination was legal, state-enforced, and difficult to contest openly. In the current era of racial hegemony, racial stratification and white dominance are achieved more subtly through coercion and consent. Omi and Winant argue that the United States is undergoing a slow, gradual, and contentious transition from a racial dictatorship to a racial democracy.

The concept of racial formation blends an understanding of social structures with an understanding of cultural representations. Omi and Winant use the concept of a **racial project**, which they define as being “simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines” (1994, 56). Racial projects give meaning to racial categories through both cultural representations and social structures. For example, Doris Marie Provine and Roxanne Lynn Doty (2011) argue that the criminalization of immigrants through intensified immigration policy enforcement is a racial project. In this example, the state targets immigrants and draws attention to their vulnerable status. The increased law enforcement and resulting media attention reinforce the marginalization of immigrants as a racialized group.

For Omi and Winant, a racial project is defined as racist if it “creates or reproduces structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race”

racial project As defined by Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994), a way of giving meaning to racial categories through cultural representations and social structures.

(1994, 71). They are careful to distinguish between race and racism and to point out that not all racial projects are racist. Projects are racist only when they reproduce structures of domination and hegemony. For example, one could argue that the criminalization of Latino immigrants is a racist project because it reinforces the marginalized status of this racialized group. Omi and Winant argue that every state institution is a racial institution. They don't go so far as to say that every state institution is *racist*. This is because they believe the state can also use racial schemas to promote racial equality.

Omi and Winant have received a substantial amount of scholarly attention, mostly positive, for the concept of racial formation. However, they have also received critiques, primarily for not putting racism at the center of their analyses (Wellman 1993; Bonilla-Silva 1997; Feagin and Elias 2013). David Wellman (1993, 10) contends that the racial formation perspective does not analyze the advantages whites receive from racial projects, thereby ignoring the question of who benefits from systems of racial domination. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (1997) posits that this perspective relies too much on ideological/cultural processes and does not pay enough attention to the ways that racialization is embedded in society. Feagin and Elias (2013) offer three critiques of Omi and Winant's work, contending that the scholars:

1. offer abstractions that are less useful than direct critiques holding whites accountable for racial inequality;
2. do not go far enough to expose the depths of racism in the United States; and
3. overlook many of the parallels between Jim Crow racism and present-day racism.

Critique 1: Not Holding Whites Accountable for Racial Inequality

In their first critique, Feagin and Elias (2012) argue that Omi and Winant do not provide "a significant and explicit discussion of whites' central and powerful role in shaping the racial hierarchy" (10). Instead of delineating who upholds the racial hierarchy, "terminology such as 'the state' obscures activities of the mostly white (male) decision-makers who control the US political economy" (10). Feagin and Elias critique Omi and Winant for pointing to the "new racial state" instead of the "new white political power elite-controlled governmental, policy-making structure" (11). They contend that by not clearly identifying the actors who reproduce racial inequality, Omi and Winant's analysis is less useful than other approaches to dismantling racism. Whereas Feagin and Elias argue that Omi and Winant should specify who the actors

maintaining racial inequality are and how whites maintain the racial order, Omi and Winant (1994) maintain that the state should be our primary focus. They further assert that they “have little patience with the argument that racism is solely a white problem” (72).

Feagin and Elias (2013) also critique Omi and Winant for not being specific about how racial hegemony is maintained. However, Omi and Winant’s work is primarily theoretical and does not have an empirical focus. One could use the racial formation perspective to understand better who the actors in “the new racial state” are. For example, we could apply this approach to analyzing why U.S. immigration policies disproportionately affect blacks and Latinos. Thus, although Omi and Winant could have more clearly specified who is creating the current racial order, their framework remains useful and paves the way for future research.

Critique 2: Not Going Far Enough to Expose the Depths of Racism

Feagin and Elias’s (2013) second critique is that Omi and Winant do not expose the depths of racism in the United States. This critique is based on how we understand racism as operating. Feagin and Elias contend that Omi and Winant do not “substantially and critically dissect” the “structural reality of US society’s racial group order” (12). They also argue that in the racial formation perspective, race is primarily a question of individual prejudice, and they contend that Omi and Winant give primacy to struggles over racial meanings instead of struggles over power and resources. Feagin and Elias believe the more important question is: What group has the power to impose meanings? They concede that racial meanings are important yet contend that they are best understood in the context of racial oppression.

An evaluation of this critique requires a close reading of Omi and Winant (1994). Do these scholars (1) suggest that racism is primarily a question of individual bigotry, (2) link racism to structural factors, and (3) ignore the history of white racial domination? Omi and Winant argue that race signifies “difference and structure[s] inequality” and that “a racialized social structure shapes racial experience and conditions meaning” (57). Thus, it seems fair to say, as Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (1997) points out, that Omi and Winant pay less attention to structure than they might, but it is not fair to say that they completely fail to link racism to structural factors, because they do. Omi and Winant prefer to focus on the linkages between structural factors and their cultural manifestations and argue that racial projects do the ideological work of making these linkages. Racial projects connect the meaning of race to social structures that redistribute resources unevenly.

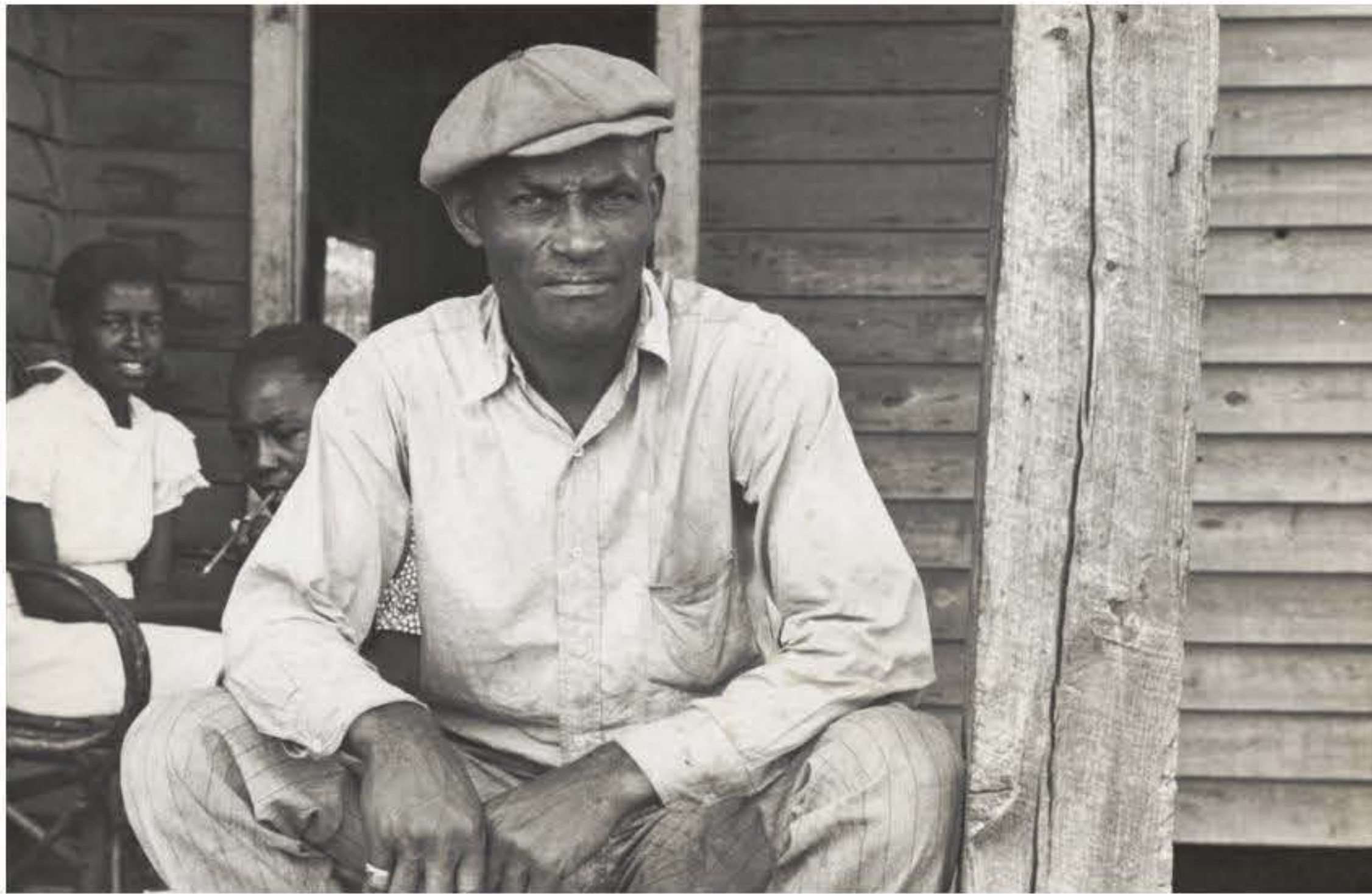
Critique 3: Overlooking Parallels Between Jim Crow Racism and Racism Today

Feagin and Elias's (2013) third critique is that racial "formation theory presents a relatively optimistic view of racial progress, especially over the last half-century" (19) and that "Omi and Winant often seem to view white racism today as something tacked onto an otherwise healthy, progressing US democracy" (12). Feagin and Elias contend that Omi and Winant present too rosy a vision of racial progress in the United States and need to take a closer look at the lack of gains made by African Americans since the civil rights movement. Fundamentally, Feagin and Elias are asking if it is true that the United States is undergoing a transition from a racial dictatorship to a racial democracy.

First, we need to go back to Omi and Winant's (1994) work to determine if this is a fair critique—do they argue that the United States has experienced significant progress since the Jim Crow era without regard for the persistence of racial inequalities? Omi and Winant maintain that "it is obvious that the attitudes, practices, and institutions of the epochs of slavery, say, or of Jim Crow, no longer exist today" (71) and that the struggles of the 1950s and 1960s "dramatically transformed the political and cultural landscape of the U.S. . . . [and] achieved limited but very real reforms" (95). However, they also recognize that much ground has been lost and that racial inequality persists today. It would be hard to disagree with their contention that the civil rights movement transformed the meanings of racial identities in the United States; yet it is also possible that they have overstated the gains made in combating racial inequality.

To explore this disagreement over the gains in racial equality in the post-civil rights era, it is useful to consider how Omi and Winant's depictions stand up to Michelle Alexander's (2011) contention that mass incarceration is the "New Jim Crow." Alexander argues that our criminal justice system systematically denies rights and opportunities to African Americans, effectively replacing the openly racist policies of the past. Incarceration has become a common life event for African Americans, and according to Alexander,

Today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all the ways that it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans. Once you're labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination—employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service—are suddenly legal. (2011, 2)



Sharecropper, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1935. Michelle Alexander contends that a criminal freed from prison today faces a situation similar to that faced by black men at the height of Jim Crow, such as this sharecropper photographed here in Little Rock Arkansas in 1935.

She even goes so far as to contend that “today a criminal freed from prison has scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a freed slave or a black person living ‘free’ in Mississippi at the height of Jim Crow” (Alexander 2010, 138). How do Omi and Winant’s (1994) claims hold up in the face of this evidence?

It seems that their main contention—that racial identities have been transformed since slavery and Jim Crow—can be retained, regardless of this reality. However, their contention that the attitudes, practices, and institutions of Jim Crow have been completely dismantled does seem overstated. Rather, it seems, as Alexander contends, that these practices have been replaced with other equally pernicious systems of racial control.

Joe Feagin’s contributions to our understanding of the historical and present-day operations of racism in the United States—particularly with regard to antiblack oppression—have been tremendous. Feagin’s work has generated thousands of books, articles, book chapters, theses, and dissertations that focus on the operations of racism in the United States. Likewise, Omi and Winant’s seminal *Racial Formations* has served as the basis for a substantial body of scholarly work on racial identities, meanings, and iterations.

research focus

Examining Legitimized Racism against Indigenous Peoples

Sociologist Dwanna Robertson (2015) questions the assumption that overt racism is no longer socially acceptable in the United States. She argues that this claim does not hold true for indigenous peoples in particular. Whereas other groups may face primarily covert or color-blind racism, “Natives still routinely experience overt racism in the form of racial epithets like ‘redskin,’ ‘injun,’ and ‘squaw’ and horribly distorted depictions of Natives as mascots” (113).

Because of the widespread nature of racist discourse and practices toward indigenous people, Robertson contends that racism against Native Americans has been “legitimized” (115). By this term, she means that racist images, mascots, and stereotypes are so pervasive that they have become acceptable.

Many race scholars contend that overt bigotry is relatively rare and has been replaced with more polite forms of racism. Yet Robertson argues that this is not the case for Native Americans. On television, Native Americans see a football team called the Redskins. On Halloween, they see gross caricatures of their culture. In schoolyards, they overhear children “playing Indian.” On Columbus Day, they witness a celebration of their genocide. Every day, Native Americans hear negative racial stereotypes, such as that they are drunks or savages.

Robertson interviewed forty-five Native Americans, many of whom told her about their experiences of overt racism. Will, a Chickasaw man, explained that many people have negative views of Native Americans: “We are considered drunks. Lazy, dirty drunks. They look at the reservations, and they see all the old cars just broke down and the shanty shacks, and a lot of people feel that the Indians get money all the time, and that’s why they live in poverty, because they take their money and drink all the time” (131).

Tom, a Penobscot man, shared similar experiences. He said: “I hear things like: ‘Show me an Indian, I’ll show you a drunk Indian.’ ‘Indians are lazy.’ We won’t get jobs because we get everything for free. They think we all get casino money and government entitlements. . . . But I still have to work, and I can’t even drink a beer without people throwing stereotypes around” (130).

Native women experience racial discrimination particular to their gender and sexuality. Maggie, a Maliseet woman, described the trauma she experienced: “As I got into puberty, white boys seemed to have some kind of idea that I was ‘wild’ and would be more willing to have sex with them. . . . Boys would grab me and say stuff and call me ‘Pocahontas.’ They didn’t treat other [white] girls on their street that way” (132).

Eva, another Native woman in Robertson’s study, recalled being mistreated as a child as well. She explained: “I remember being pushed in the pool before, called squaw or dirty squaw. But I also remember [hanging out] with a close friend of mine and her friend once, and because I was darker skinned I was accused of being dirty. Because when you’re darker, obviously on your elbows and your knees you have darker skin and she’s like, ‘Why are you so dirty? Why don’t you clean yourself?’” (135)

(continued)

Robertson's research makes it clear that Native Americans experience overt racism in many forms. She argues that this racism has been normalized and institutionally legitimized, rendering it invisible both in public and in scholarly discourse.

For Discussion

1. What is legitimized racism? Can the concept be applied to groups other than Native Americans? Why or why not?
2. Compare and contrast the concept of legitimized racism to another form of racism discussed in this chapter.

Source: Robertson 2015.

WHITE SUPREMACY AND SETTLER COLONIALISM

What if we consider present-day racism in the United States from the perspective of indigenous studies? From this perspective, we are forced to contend with questions related to the meaning of white control of lands that once belonged to Native Americans. What would the end of racism look like for indigenous peoples? We can imagine that Native Americans have an entirely different set of claims than do African Americans.

Andrea Smith (2012) argues that there are three pillars of white supremacy: (1) antiblack racism, (2) genocide, and (3) orientalism (Table 4-1). Antiblack racism defines people as property, thereby justifying slavery and current forms of exploitation, and is rooted in a logic of capitalism—that is, designed to extract profit. Genocide is rooted in colonialism. This is the idea that native people are disappearing and must disappear, and that therefore non-native people have a right to everything that once belonged to native people. Orientalism is rooted in the idea that certain nations or peoples pose a permanent threat to Western civilization and is thereby used to justify war.

Although the United States is no longer engaged in the mass murder and expulsion of Native Americans, many indigenous scholars contend that the logics of genocide and settler colonialism endure (Smith 2012). Native Americans continue to have a unique legal position in the United States: they are citizens both of the United States and of the tribes to which they belong.

TABLE 4-1
Pillars of White Supremacy

	Antiblack Racism	Genocide	Orientalism
Justifies	Capitalism, slavery	Colonialism	War
Position	People can be property	Native people are disappearing and must disappear	Certain nations or peoples pose a permanent threat to Western civilization

Source: Based on Smith 2012.

Scholars such as Andrea Smith (2012) contend that capitalist ideas of property ownership and white supremacist ideas of indigenous inferiority work together to justify the expropriation (seizure) of indigenous lands. From this perspective, simply returning lands to Native Americans would not solve the problem of indigenous expropriation. The more fundamental problem is the nation-state itself and the idea that people can control territory and keep other human beings out of it.

Once we recognize that the United States is a nation rooted in white supremacy, it becomes clear that the state will never grant native peoples self-determination. For some indigenous scholars, this recognition means that the struggle against racism requires a challenge to the very existence of the United States as a legitimate state (A. Smith 2012).



< Students graduating from Haskell Indian Nations University, in Lawrence, Kansas.

Joe Feagin (2001), in his systemic racism framework, contends that antiblack oppression is at the center of U.S. society, even though the United States was formed through genocide. Andrea Smith (2012) contests this framework, arguing that the United States exists precisely because of the disappearance of indigenous people and that this genocide continues today. One's framework for understanding the experience of native peoples is critical because it shapes how we view racial progress or regression. Smith points to the example of high rates of intermarriage between Native Americans and whites. Is this progress? Or is it a continuation of a pattern of genocide?

Using these perspectives, we can see how frameworks shape research questions and answers. From the perspective of settler colonialism, one might argue that the United States is an illegitimate state founded on genocide and must be dismantled. From a systemic racism perspective, one can argue that the United States is founded on a history of racism and that the Constitution must be rewritten. From a racial formation perspective, the United States is headed in the right direction and through more struggles for justice and civil rights will complete the transition from racial dictatorship to racial democracy.

research focus

Applying Settler Colonialism Theory

In Canada, nearly half of the children in foster care are aboriginal, even though only 7 percent of all Canadian children are aboriginal (Government of Canada, 2017). Social work and sociology scholars Gordon Pon, Kevin Gosine, and Doret Phillips (2011) argue that an anticolonial and critical race framework can help us understand this striking overrepresentation.

Pon and colleagues (2011) contend that “the contemporary racial disproportionality in child welfare is inseparable from the historical exigencies of race, class, and gender divisions” (387). Canada is a settler state, meaning that people came there from Europe and took over lands inhabited by aboriginal peoples. An understanding of this difficult history is critical to comprehending contemporary racial disparities in Canada. Blankets contaminated with smallpox were

used in genocidal attacks against aboriginals. In addition, aboriginal children were forced to attend Indian residential schools, where as many as 50 percent died. Pon, Gosine, and Phillips make the case that the foster care system is effectively an extension of the residential school system. They posit that “the child welfare system naturalized the removal of Aboriginal children by constructing Aboriginal women as ‘bad mothers’” (392).

Pon and his colleagues also point to another parallel between the residential schools of the past and the foster care system of today: the teachers in the residential schools were white women, as are most social workers in Canada today. Drawing from national narratives of civilization and progress, these white women promote the idea that they are saving aboriginal children from their mothers. Pon and colleagues argue that understanding the overrepresentation of aboriginal children in foster care requires acknowledging the ways that whiteness has been conceptualized—particularly the notion of the white savior, embodied in the white female social worker.

For Discussion

1. Think of three different explanations for the overrepresentation of aboriginal children in the foster care system. Identify which sociological framework your explanations are based on.
2. Why do you think Pon and colleagues find it important that most social workers are white women? Do you think that is relevant?
3. What parallels can you find between this description of the Canadian foster care system and the foster care system in the United States?
4. Why do you think the authors take an anticolonial perspective?

Source: Pon, Gosine, and Phillips 2011.

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND ANTI-ARAB RACISM

Islam is a religion. Does it make sense, then, to define **Islamophobia**—the systematic marginalization of Muslims—as racism? Because race and religion are distinct phenomena, religious discrimination and racial discrimination are not identical. Nevertheless, it is clear that the United States is a Christian-centric society and that people who are not Christians face various

Islamophobia

The systematic marginalization of Muslims.

forms of marginalization. To what extent should we think of these forms of exclusion as racism?

Ramón Grosfoguel and Eric Mielants (2006) state that Islamophobia began as religious discrimination and has evolved into racial/ethnic discrimination. They point out that, at the same time that Spaniards set out to colonize the Americas, they expelled Jews and Arabs from the Spanish peninsula. During this time, religious beliefs were the primary motivation for the marginalization of Jews and Arabs. Grosfoguel and Mielants argue that in more recent times, however, Islamophobia and anti-Arab sentiment have primarily taken the form of cultural racism—a concept discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. They explain that the tropes used to describe Muslims and Arabs such as “uncivilized,” “barbarian,” “savage,” “primitive,” “underdeveloped,” “authoritarian,” and “terrorist” (4) are markers of cultural racism.

For Grosfoguel and Mielants (2006), Islamophobia is a form of racism. Steven Salaita (2006) argues, however, that it is important to draw a distinction between Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. Despite the American conflation of Arabs and Muslims, only one-fifth of the world’s total Muslim population is Arab, and not all Arabs are Muslim (Grosfoguel and Mielants 2006). Salaita (2006) maintains that anti-Arab racism goes beyond dislike or distaste for Islam: it is used to justify U.S. military interventions in the Middle East.

INTERSECTIONAL THEORIES OF RACE AND RACISM

In what ways do race, class, and gender oppression work together? Some race scholars argue that we need to develop a concrete understanding of how race and racism work before we can understand other forms of oppression. Feminist scholars, however, often contend that we must look at race and gender oppression simultaneously—a concept known as **intersectionality**.

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) uses this concept in her work, making her point with the example of a group of black and Latina women in a battered women’s shelter. Taken together, the factors of race, class, and gender elucidate how these women ended up in the shelter. The women faced abuse in part because of gender oppression, but their economically vulnerable situation and race also help us understand their situation. If they had the economic resources, they likely would have gone elsewhere—not to a shelter. If they were white, they wouldn’t face racial discrimination in employment, meaning that they may have had more resources. If they were men, their chances of being battered

intersectionality A simultaneous look at various forms of oppression.

would be much lower. Any proposed method of helping these women must pay attention to their gender, class-based, and racial oppression. A narrow lens that focuses on just race, gender, or class would miss crucial aspects of these women's situations.

Similarly, Priya Kandaswamy (2012) contends that an intersectional perspective helps us better understand welfare policies. She argues that race scholars, Marxists, and feminists often look past one another. In contrast, she adopts an intersectional perspective to shed light on the 1996 welfare reforms. Interconnected ideas of gender, sexuality, race, and class influence public opinions about who deserves state assistance and who does not. The 1996 welfare reforms, which dramatically reduced public aid, did not mention race specifically. In contrast, the writers of the legislation had no qualms about promoting heteronormative ideas (the assumption that heterosexuality is or should be the norm): the first line of the 1996 law is: "Marriage is the foundation of a successful society." The 1996 law explicitly embraced marriage, was based on a public discussion of family values and personal responsibility, and was designed to reform the "welfare queen," a stereotypical figure who is often imagined as a black woman.

Kandaswamy (2012) explains how the idea that race is historically produced and constantly changing can complicate our understanding of intersectionality, as it forces us to look at how race and gender "are constituted in and through each other" (26). Race is a socially constructed idea that has developed in conjunction with ideas about gender, class, and sexuality. In this examination of welfare policy, Kandaswamy explains concretely how the adoption of an intersectional perspective can enhance a racial formation perspective.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Theories of systemic, structural, and institutional racism provide us with different frameworks to understand the deep-seated nature of racial inequality in the United States. These analyses place the emphasis on racism and are exemplified by Feagin and Elias (2012), who argue that only through an understanding of racial oppression can we grasp the true nature of racial meanings. In contrast, racial formation theory focuses on how race is constructed, and it uses these analyses to understand racism (Omi and Winant 1994). Who is right?

There is no right answer to this question. Instead, it depends on the kind of question you are asking. An understanding of why African Americans

and Latinos are faring worse economically than whites in the aftermath of the Great Recession would likely benefit from an analysis based on systemic or structural racism (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor 2011). A consideration of why Indonesian women use whitening creams and yet insist they have no desire to be Caucasian might get a more nuanced treatment when approached from a racial formations perspective (Saraswati 2010). These two studies are both grounded in the field of racial and ethnic studies, but they have different research questions and goals and thus draw from different frameworks.

The frameworks set forth by indigenous and feminist scholars can also be more or less useful, depending on the kinds of questions you decide to ask. A consideration of Mayan migration to Houston would likely benefit from Andrea Smith’s (2012) indigenous-settler framework, and an analysis of violence among youth gangs in Oakland, California, would likely be enriched by an intersectional perspective that focuses on race, class, gender, and sexuality. No theory can be expected to shed light on every aspect of our society. Moreover, sociologists and other thinkers continue to develop ways for us to understand inequality. Readers of these texts can decide for themselves which frameworks are most useful for understanding the questions that are important to them. What about you? What frameworks do you find most compelling, and why?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

sociological theory of racism	97	systemic racism	105	racial project	110
individual racism	98	structural racism	106	Islamophobia	119
racial microaggression	99	racialized social systems	108	intersectionality	120
institutional racism	102	racial formation	109		

4.1 How is individual racism linked to institutional inequality? (pp. 98–104)

- Prejudice, discrimination, and institutional racism are interconnected and thus should not be studied in isolation.

Review

- » How do prejudice and discrimination differ, and what is the larger context in which they occur?
- » How widespread is individual racism?
- » What are some examples of racial microaggressions?

Critical Thinking

- » How does individual racism persist?
- » How does institutional racism persist?

4.2 What are the key similarities and differences between systemic racism and structural racism? (pp. 105–109)

- Systemic racism and structural racism are two theoretical frameworks that aim to explain how racism is deeply rooted in society. While systemic racism focuses on accumulated acts of racism across history and throughout one's lifetime, structural racism points to interinstitutional interactions across time and space.

Review

- » How do systemic racism and structural racism reproduce and justify racial disparities?
- » How does structural racism explain wealth inequalities?

Critical Thinking

- » How might the differences between systemic and structural racism shape a research agenda?

4.3 What is racial formation, and how does this concept inform our understanding of racial inequality? (pp. 109–114)

- Racial formation is one of the most influential theories of race and racism in the United States. It focuses on racial meanings—how racial categories are “created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed,” as Omi and Winant (1994) describe. This theory has received a significant amount of scholarly attention, mostly positive, but it has also been critiqued for not putting racism at the center of analysis.

Review

- » What is an example of a racial project?

Critical Thinking

- » What do Omi and Winant mean when they say the United States is transitioning from a racial dictatorship to a racial democracy?

4.4 What does the perspective of indigenous studies reveal about racism in the United States today? (pp. 116–118)

- Another way to consider how racism works is to examine it from the perspective of indigenous studies. This leads us to consider settler colonialism theory, which offers a broad critique of racism and capitalism.

Review

- » What are the three pillars of white supremacy?
- » Why is it important to understand genocide in relation to contemporary race relations?

Critical Thinking

- » Are members of some racial groups more likely to experience specific kinds of racism (e.g., legitimized racism, cultural racism, structural racism)? Why or why not? Discuss at least two distinct racial groups and at least two forms of racism to make your case.

4.5 How is Islamophobia related to racism? (pp. 119–120)

- Although Islamophobia refers to the systematic marginalization of Muslims—a religious group—some scholars argue that it is a form of racism.

Review

- » On what basis do scholars argue that Islamophobia is a form of racism?

Critical Thinking

- » Can you make a case that Islamophobia is a form of racism, drawing from one of the theories of racism outlined in this chapter?

4.6 In what ways do race, class, and gender oppression work together? (pp. 120–121)

- Ideas of race, gender, class, and sexuality all shape how racism works, and intersectional scholars take these factors seriously as they build their frameworks.

Review

- » What is an example of a scenario that intersectional theory helps us understand?

Critical Thinking

- » Most of the scholars cited in the section on intersectionality are women of color. Why do you think these scholars have been at the head of these debates and discussions?
- » Think of an issue related to racial inequality, and use one of the frameworks discussed in this chapter to explain it. Justify your selection of this framework over others.

Talking about Race

Structural ideas of racism help us understand how racial inequality can be reproduced even in the absence of overtly racist acts. What racial disparities in your community could be explained by a structural theory? How can you use what you have learned in this chapter to explain such disparities? Some examples might include a lack of green spaces in nonwhite neighborhoods, a preponderance of minorities in lower-quality schools, or a concentration of nonwhites in poorer areas of the city.



Mural from the Wide Open Walls art village project, Kubuneh, near Brikama, The Gambia. (*Plinthpics/Alamy Stock Photo*)

5

Racism in the Media

The Spread of Ideology

As You Read

- 5.1 How are racial stereotypes propagated in popular culture?
- 5.2 How have new media changed the way stereotypes are spread and countered?
- 5.3 How do media images serve to justify racial inequality?
- 5.4 How are media representations raced, classed, and gendered?

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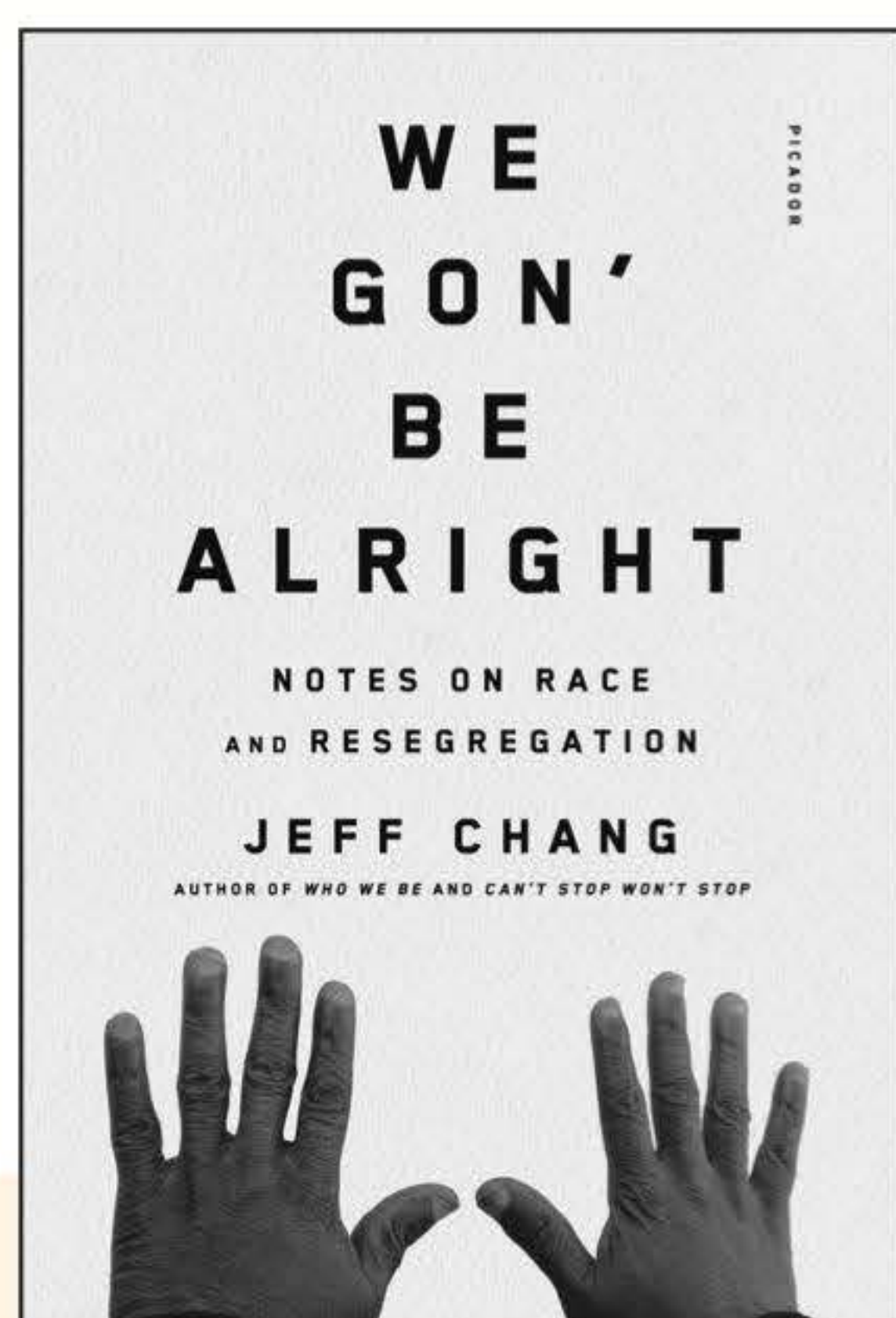
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Comedian Chris Rock has described Hollywood as a “white industry” (*The Hollywood Reporter* 2014). And as Jeff Chang explains in this excerpt from *We Gon’ Be Alright: Notes on Race and Resegregation*, Hollywood storylines often come from a white perspective. Representations have changed with the release of hits such as *Black-ish* and *Fresh Off the Boat*, as he notes, yet people of color are broadly underrepresented as writers, directors, and producers.

In the first year of Obama’s presidency, ABC’s *Modern Family* reconstructed the suburban sitcom by augmenting the stock white nuclear family with an extended clan that featured a gay couple with an adopted Asian American child, and a patriarch with a gorgeous young Latina wife and child. In Hollywood elevator-pitch terms, it was *Married with Children* meets *I Love Lucy* and *The Birdcage*. But its surprise success made it possible for TV execs to gingerly step back toward shows with leads of color. For twenty years, Asians had not had a lead on television, but in 2016 *Fresh Off the Boat*, *Quantico*, and *Dr. Ken* were among ABC’s top shows. ABC was also home to *Black-ish* and Shonda Rhimes’s *Scandal* and *How to Get Away with Murder*. On Fox, *Empire* continued to crush the ratings. They were *the* big stories in a company town that loves to celebrate its successes.

So maybe it seems a bit rude, a bit vibe-killing to note that, despite all of this, Hollywood remains overwhelmingly white. But it does. In February 2016, when Channing Dungey, an African American woman, was named president of ABC Entertainment, she became the first person of color to head a major network. In 2014, less than 6 percent of executive producers and 14 percent of writers were of color. These numbers had barely changed in a decade. Hollywood may indeed be run by the most liberal whites in the country—some of them have written and acted and produced with the deepest of empathy. But they can never be a substitute for people who can tell their own stories best. That was the lesson of *Black-ish*, *Fresh Off the Boat*, and *Empire*’s breakthroughs, a lesson that needed to be relearned every twenty years or so. Millions wanted to see shows written, directed, and acted by people of color telling stories about themselves. Duh.

And yet the odds of a person of color breaking into the upper echelon of the culture, where the stories and songs and visions that we tell ourselves about ourselves—with all their values, meanings, and instructions for living—are gathered, made, and produced, and then marketed, sold, and pushed back to us, remain long indeed.

Source: Chang 2016.

If you were to watch the films of the early twentieth century, you would find that people of color are portrayed almost exclusively in stereotypical roles: Native Americans are represented as silent Indian chiefs, Arabs play the roles of desert sheikhs, Latinas appear as sexual objects, and African Americans play roles of maids and buffoons. Fast-forward to the twenty-first century, and we find more nuanced depictions. Nevertheless, there are still traces of these historical stereotypes in film, television, and even new media.

Moreover, these stereotypes are not harmless: they have real and enduring consequences. Representations of blacks and Latinos as poor and lawbreaking, for example, reinforce popular notions about black and Latino cultural deficiencies. The pervasiveness of these images leads many Americans to falsely believe that higher incarceration rates among blacks and Latinos are due to higher criminality (Feagin 2001; P. H. Collins 2004). This stance ignores evidence to the contrary, as well as the racially discriminatory nature of the criminal justice system. However, it makes sense to people who constantly see images of blacks and Latinos shooting and robbing on television. Just as past stereotypes about black laziness served to justify slavery, current representations of blacks as criminals work to justify the high rates of incarceration of African Americans. Representations of people of color on television are modern versions of the stereotypical images created to justify slavery, segregation, genocide, colonialism, and exclusion.

In this chapter, we will focus on racial ideologies propagated in the media. How do these ideologies play a role in normalizing and justifying racial inequality? Why do racial segregation and inequality remain prevalent despite laws against racial discrimination? An understanding of how the media reproduce racial stereotypes will help us answer these questions. More pointedly, this examination will show how media portrayals may partly explain why so little is being done about racial disparities in a nation that purportedly values equality and democracy.

PORTRAYALS AND REPRESENTATIONS IN ENTERTAINMENT

In 2015, people in the United States watched, on average, 2.8 hours of television a day, making television viewing the most common leisure activity in the country (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016). Given that Americans spend so much time in front of screens, it is no wonder television shows and films have a great influence on how we see the world. Think, for example, of two popular shows: *Girls* and *Sex and the City*, both of which took place in the extraordinarily diverse New York City. According to the 2010 U.S. census,

over one-third of the population of New York City is foreign-born, and the city's population is less than half white. In these two shows, however, all of the main characters were white, and the tremendous racial and ethnic diversity of their city was largely unnoticeable, even when the characters were in public. By presenting primarily white people in primarily white spaces, representations in shows such as these naturalize racial segregation. It thus seems perfectly natural to many white Americans that they themselves would live in primarily white neighborhoods and send their children to primarily white schools, even when they too live in multiracial urban areas (Orfield 2009). Racial segregation thus becomes completely normal and desirable.

Because film and television shape how we see the world, it is important to consider how various groups are represented (At a Glance 5.1). Media scholars Stacy Smith, Marc Choueiti, and Katherine Pieper (2016) issued a telling report on diversity of representation in American entertainment. Their report is based on movies theatrically released in 2014 and prime-time first-run scripted series, as well as digital offerings between September 1, 2014, and August 31, 2015, for a total of 414 stories. They found that only 28.3 percent of all speaking characters were people of color, yet people of color make up 37.9 percent of the U.S. population. As previous studies have found, shows and movies are mostly black and white, as 71.7 percent of all characters were white, 12.2 percent were black, 5.8 percent were Hispanic/Latino, 5.1 percent were Asian, and 2.3 percent were Middle Eastern. Over half of all shows and movies featured no speaking Asian characters, and 22 percent featured no black speaking characters. There was even more disparity at the level of directors, with only 13 percent of directors coming from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. Notably, only two directors were black women.

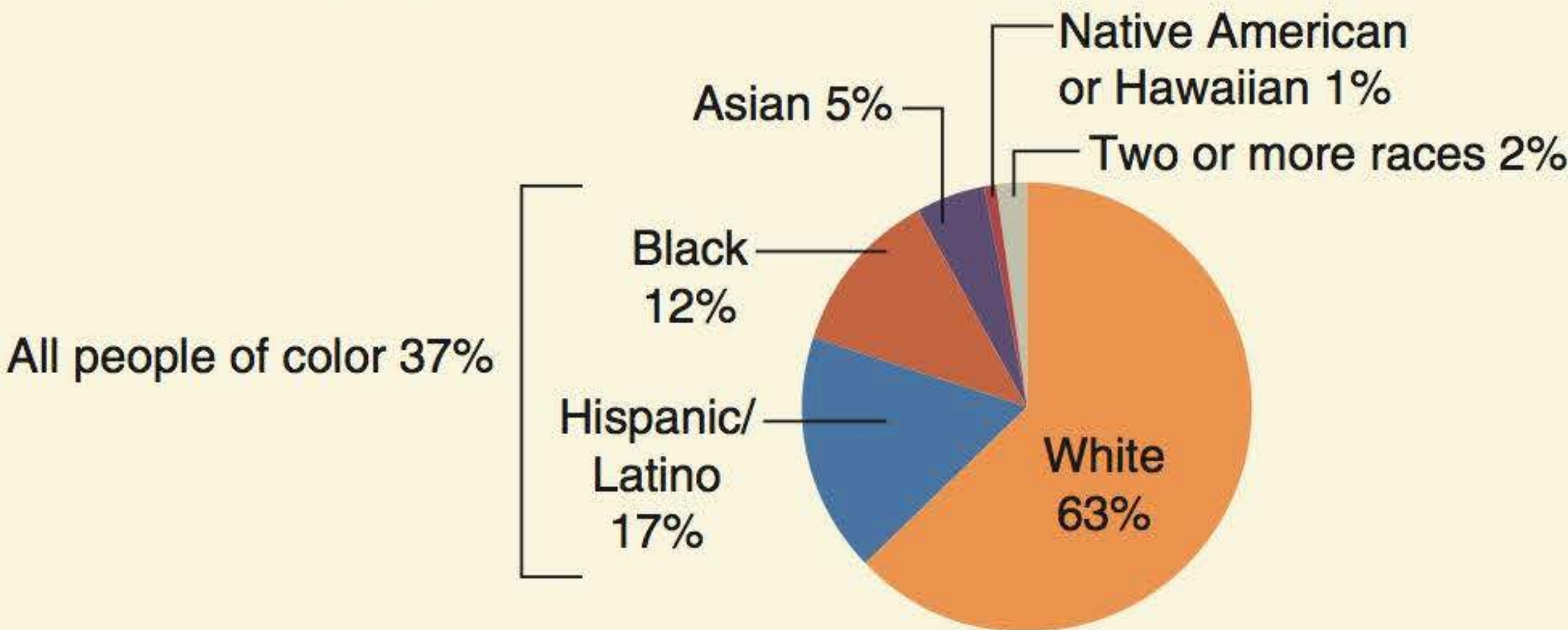
Latinos stand out as the most underrepresented group in American entertainment, and all people of color are underrepresented as leading characters and in executive roles (Smith et al. 2016; Yuen 2016). Nancy Yuen (2016) explains that whites are 62.6 percent of the population, yet make up 74.1 percent of all speaking roles in films, 80.7 percent of all cable TV leads, 83.3 percent of all film leads, and 93.5 percent of all broadcast TV leads. Whites also account for 81 percent of all directors and an astounding 96 percent of all television network and studio heads.

Portrayals of Blacks

Prior to the civil rights era, portrayals of blacks on television and in popular culture were uniformly stereotypical. Shows such as *Amos 'n' Andy* featured African Americans who appeared almost exclusively as maids, cooks, con

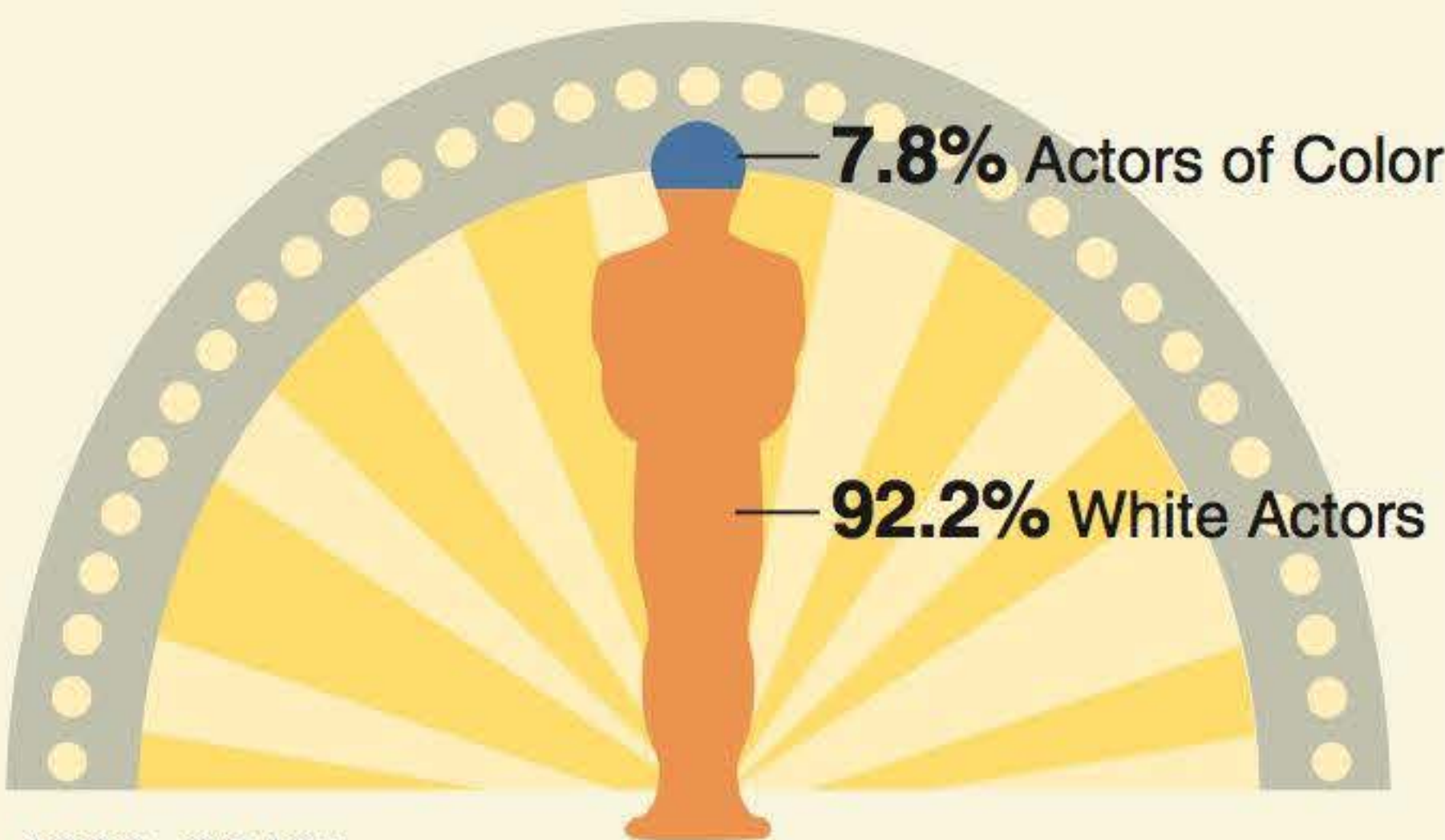
AT A GLANCE 5.1 Underrepresentation of People of Color in American Film and Television

Overall U.S. Population



Data from American Community Survey 2015

Academy Award Winners



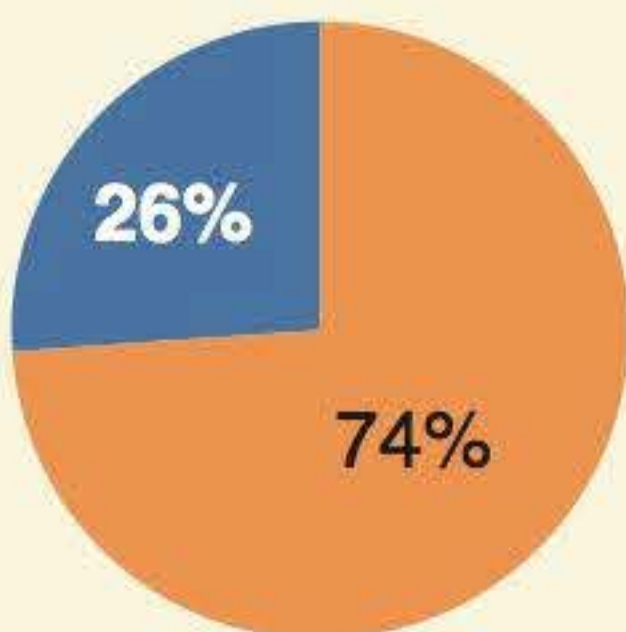
1929–2016*

*In 2017, the winners of two of the four acting Oscars were African American

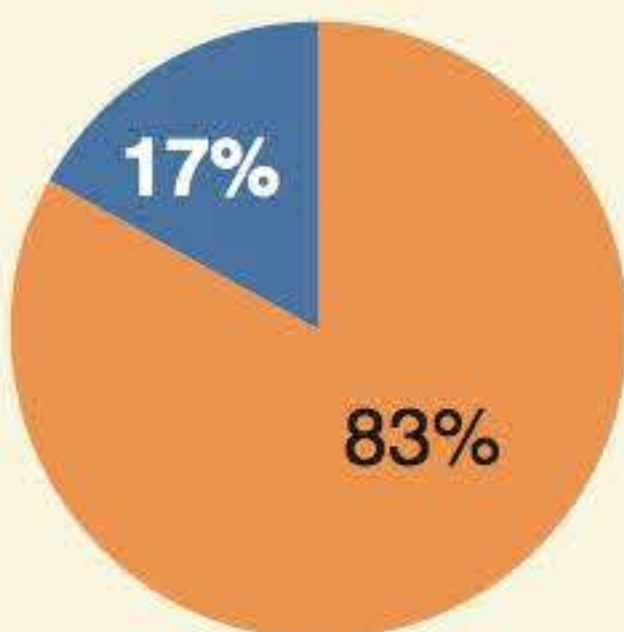
Data from Yuen 2016; Statuette image © A.M.P.A.S.®

Acting Roles Across all film and TV, whites were overrepresented, while Latinos were specifically underrepresented: 75% of all speaking characters were white, 12% were black, 6% were Hispanic/Latino, and 5% were Asian.

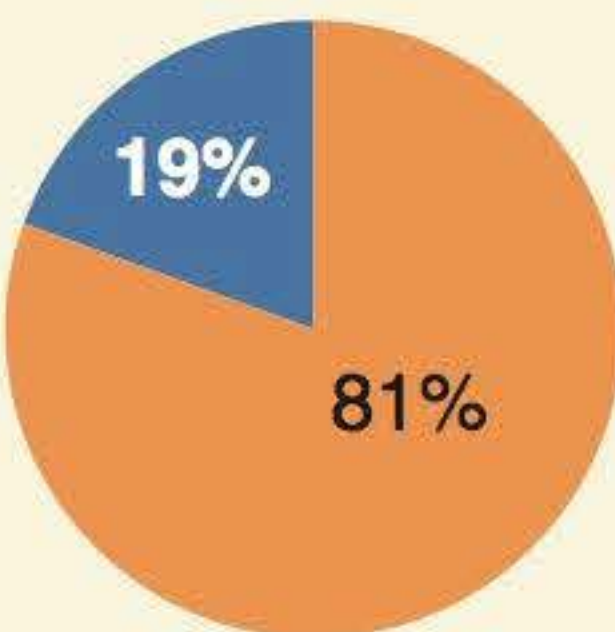
Film speaking roles



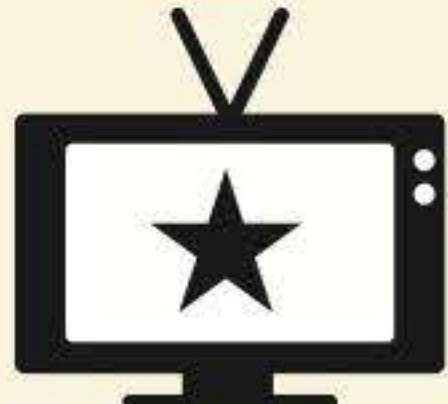
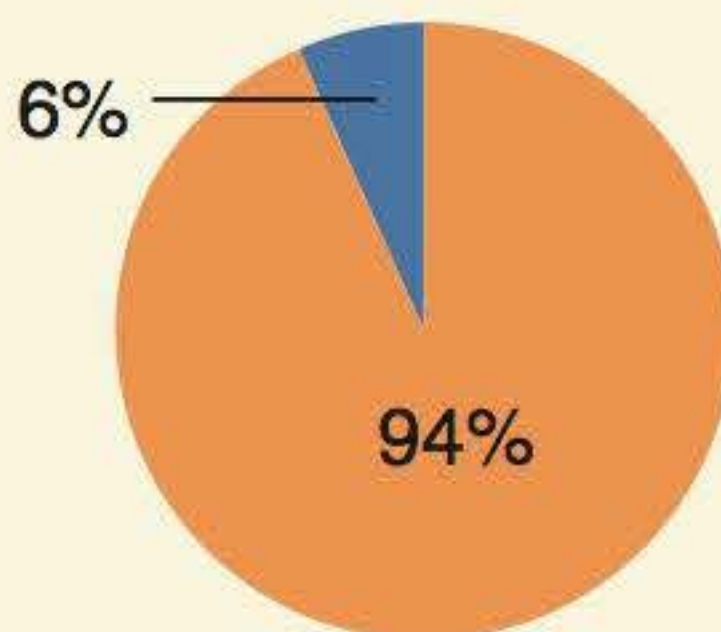
Film leads



Cable TV leads



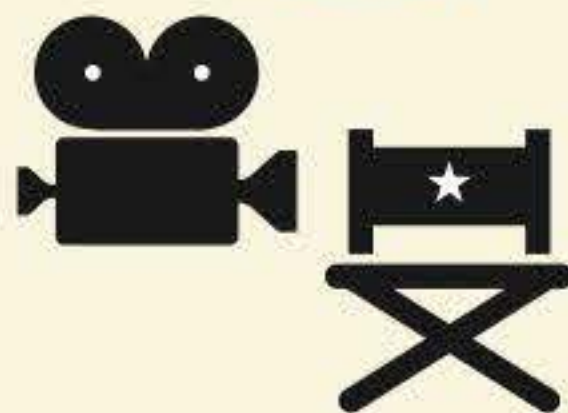
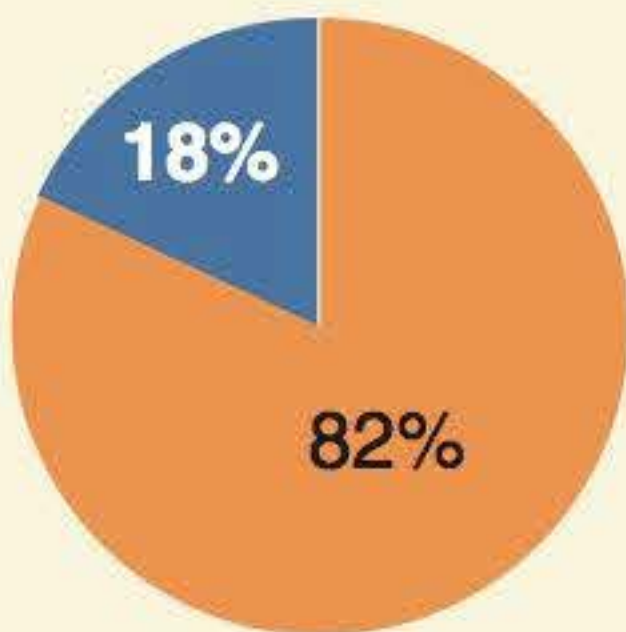
Broadcast TV leads



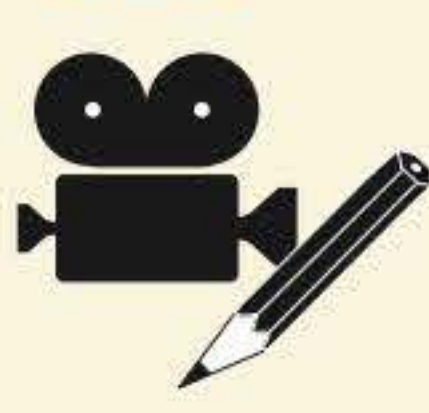
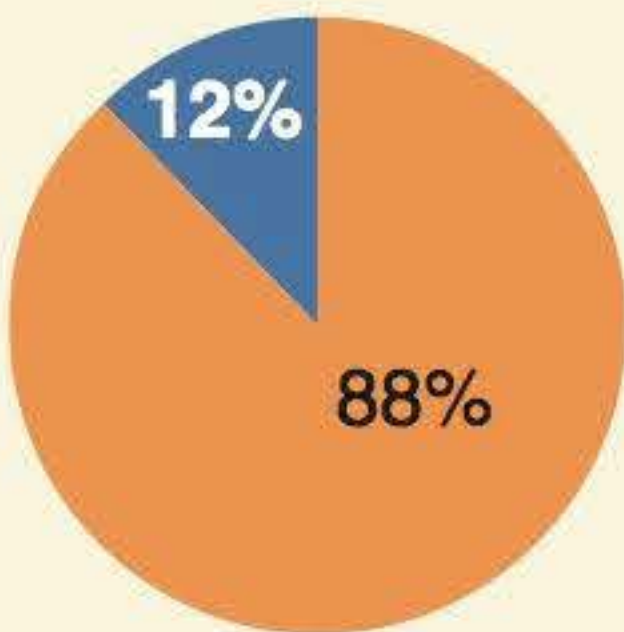
Data from Smith et al. 2016; Yuen 2016

Writing and Directing Roles

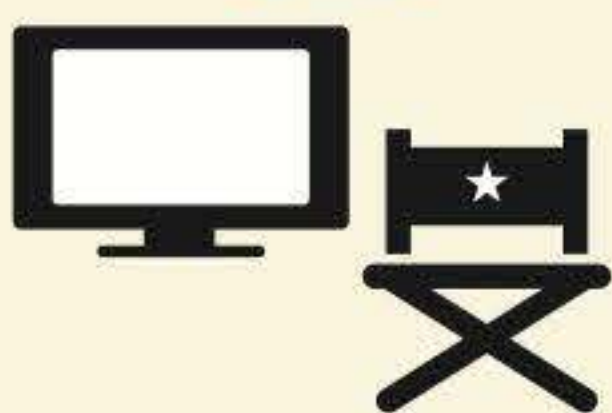
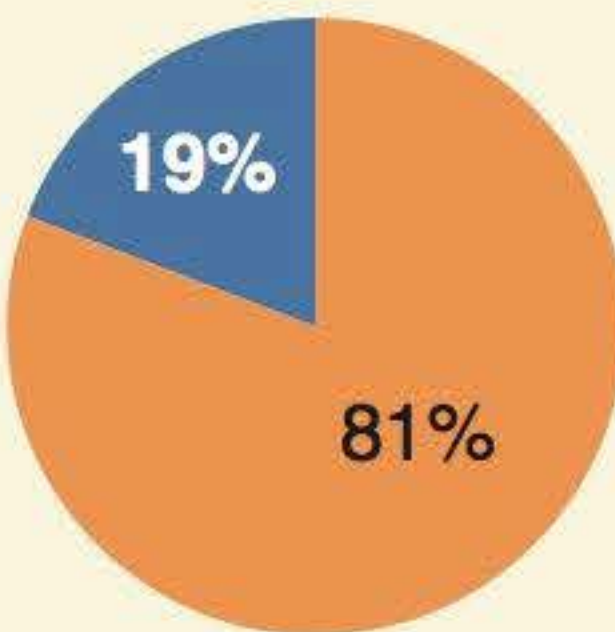
Film directors



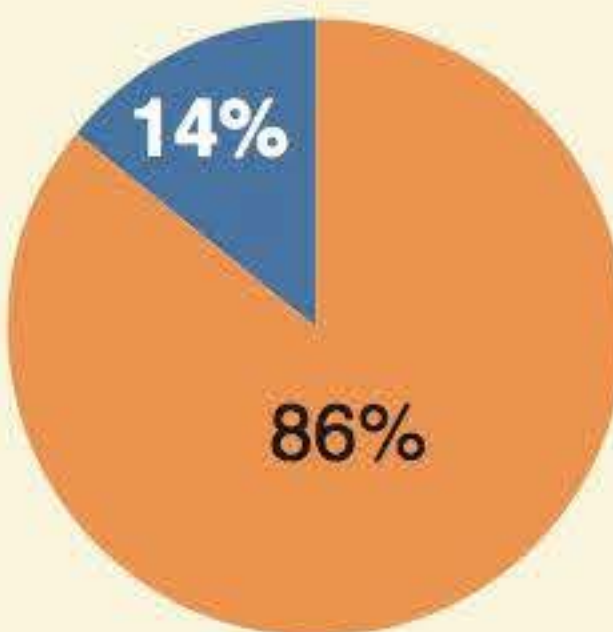
Film writers



TV directors

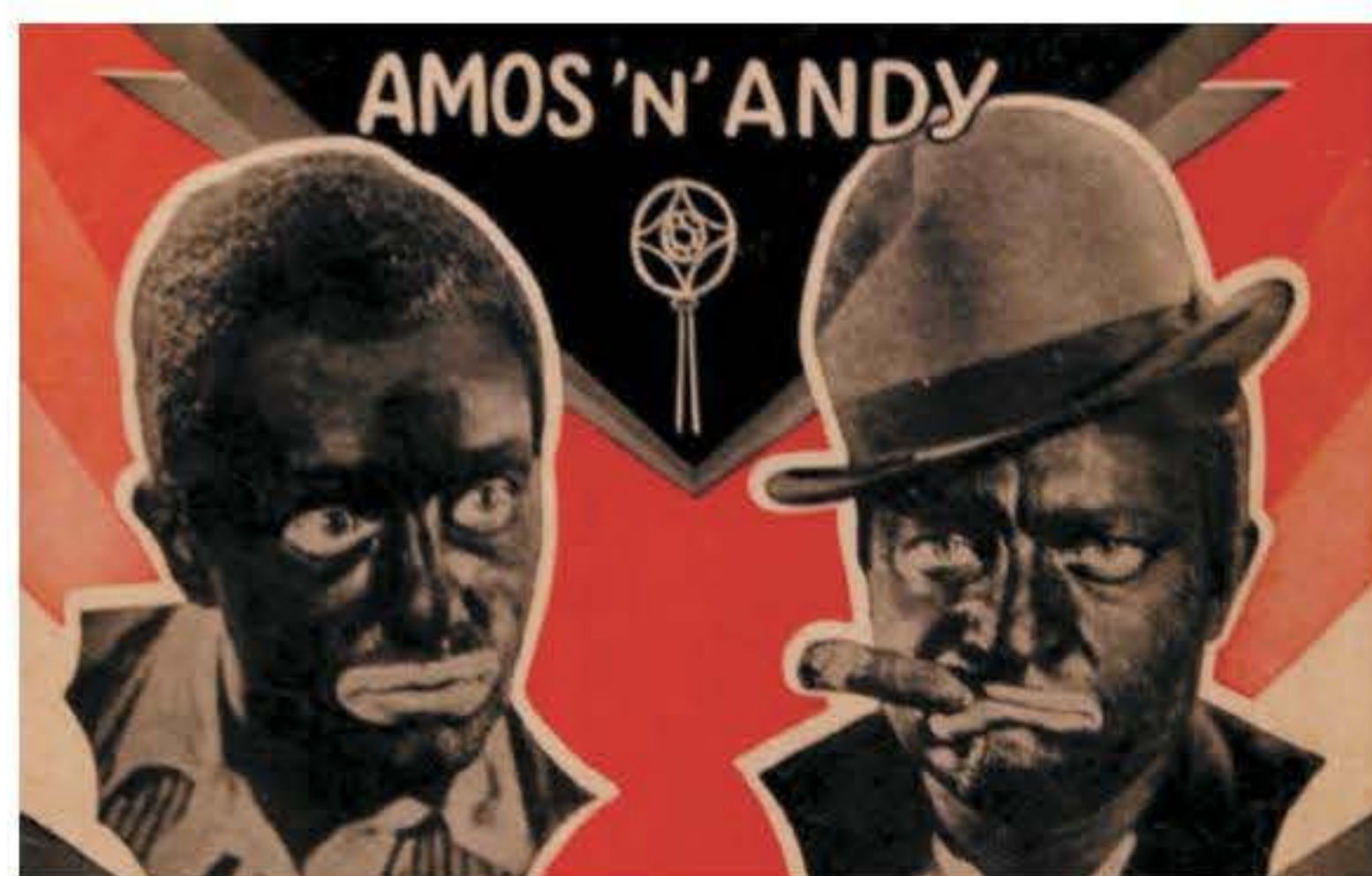


TV writers



Data from Yuen 2016

Whites People of color



▲ Prior to the civil rights era, shows such as *Amos 'n' Andy*, which poked fun at African Americans, were commonplace.

artists, or deadbeats. These representations served to legitimize the racial order of overt white dominance. The logic of the era was that African Americans were incapable of self-governance and thus were well served by the racial order of the day. Whites were reassured that while blacks were often good servants and entertainers, they were not capable of assuming the responsibilities of full citizenship. The NAACP contended that *Amos 'n' Andy* exclusively represented blacks as lazy, stupid, loud, thieving, and dishonest and promoted racial prejudice against blacks; it eventually leveled a lawsuit against CBS because of these portrayals. The lawsuit was successful and resulted in *Amos 'n' Andy* being taken off the air in 1953 (Gray 1995; Hunt 2005).

In the 1980s, a completely different kind of show became popular. Instead of presenting blacks as deadbeats or servants, *The Cosby Show* had a central cast of successful black characters. It reached the top of television viewers' rankings and remained there for most of its eight years on prime-time television (Hunt 2005). The show, which first aired in 1984, was about a middle-class African American family made up of Cliff Huxtable, a doctor; his wife, Clair, a lawyer; and their five children. The family lived in a spacious brownstone in New York City and was successful economically, socially, and educationally. The depictions could not be further from those of *Amos 'n' Andy*. However, even though *The Cosby Show* did not reinforce negative stereotypes of blacks, it still worked to reproduce what communications scholars Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis (1992) call **enlightened racism**: the idea that the United States is a land of opportunity and that African Americans could do better if they only tried harder.

enlightened racism The idea that the United States is a land of opportunity and that African Americans could do better if they only tried harder.

Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis conducted fifty-two focus groups with white and black Americans about *The Cosby Show* and found that white Americans were able to accept the Huxtable family as people like them. There was a catch, however: although white Americans were happy to have the Huxtables in their living rooms each week, the show did not reduce stereotypes about other African Americans. Instead, the depiction of successful blacks on television reinforced “enlightened racism,” as Jhally and Lewis described it. Moreover, white Americans began to see themselves as less racist because they liked the Huxtables and other African Americans who behaved similarly. Whites attributed any negative feelings they might have had about other African Americans not to their blackness, but to how they behaved. The fact that the Huxtables never experienced racism further reinforced the idea that racism is the direct result of how African Americans behave.

In the media today, we see another seemingly positive image of African Americans: the black athlete. African Americans dominate U.S. sports, and Americans of all hues idolize black athletes. The idolization of black athletes might make it seem as if the media tend to portray these athletes in a positive manner. However, scholars who analyze the portrayal of black athletes point out that these portrayals also reinforce stereotypes and that the media portray black and white athletes quite differently (King and Springwood 2001). For example, when black athletes transgress moral or legal boundaries, the media are quick to home in on the stories—especially those that reinforce stereotypes. One example Charles Fruehling Springwood and C. Richard King give is of Christian Peter, a white football player, and Lawrence Phillips, a black football player, both of whom played at the University of Nebraska. When Peter was accused of assaulting a white woman, the incident received attention only in Lincoln, Nebraska. When Phillips, however, was charged with beating his white ex-girlfriend, it received intense national coverage, including a segment on *60 Minutes*. Fruehling and King also juxtapose athletes Kobe Bryant and Drew Henson. They argue that when Kobe Bryant, who is black, decided not to attend college full-time, the media commentary suggested that Bryant needed refinement, training, and discipline, and that this was a bad decision. In contrast, when Drew Henson, who is white, made a similar decision, the conversation in the media did not revolve around his maturity or his possibilities for upward mobility.

Stereotypical representations in sports also extend to women. David Leonard (2014) explains how portrayals of white tennis player Candace Parker differ from those of black players Venus and Serena Williams. He argues that Parker is portrayed as representing an ideal femininity, both nurturing and sexual. In contrast, the Williams sisters are often portrayed as muscular, aggressive, and masculine. Instead of focusing on their talent, media representations of both Parker and the Williams sisters often home in on their bodies—and they do so in racialized ways.

African American women are portrayed in stereotypical ways in the media more generally. A study by Melissa Harris-Perry (2011) revealed that stereotyped caricatures of black women—as Mammies, Sapphires, and Jezebels—continue to be prominent. A **Mammy** is a stereotypical image of a black maid, encapsulated by the “Aunt Jemima” icon and taking its name from “Mammy” in *Gone with the Wind*. **Sapphire** was one of the main characters on *Amos ‘n’ Andy* and is a caricature of an angry black woman. **Jezebel** is a name with biblical origins that has come to signify an oversexed or hypersexual black woman. Harris-Perry (2011) found that these three stereotypes about African American women have been prominent in political and popular culture since

Mammy A stereotypical image of a black maid.

Sapphire One of the main characters on the television show *Amos ‘n’ Andy*; the caricature of an angry black woman.

Jezebel A name with biblical origins that has come to signify a stereotypically oversexed or hypersexual black woman.



(a)



(b)



(c)

▲ (a) Hattie McDaniel as “Mammy” in *Gone with the Wind* (1939). (b) The Mammy stereotype is encapsulated in the “Aunt Jemima” logo, portrayed here by Anna Robinson in the 1930s. (c) In 1989, Quaker changed the logo to a less offensive image.

the Civil War and influence how black women perceive themselves and are perceived by others.

Over the past few years, representations of African Americans on television have improved considerably. One example is Issa Rae’s HBO series, *Insecure*, which premiered in 2016 and is based on Rae’s webseries hit, *Awkward Black Girl*. The comedy features a variety of protagonists, most of whom are African American, and Issa Rae stars as a version of herself. The show is set in Los Angeles, where Issa works at a youth-oriented nonprofit. The show revolves

around Issa's relationships, particularly with her best friend, Molly, a driven lawyer; and her boyfriend, Lawrence, who is looking for a job. With several black protagonists, *Insecure* is able to avoid stereotypical portrayals of black people. Additionally, the show does not shy away from dealing with racism, especially in the workplace—showing a reality many African Americans face.

Why *Black-ish* Is the Show We Need Right Now

Last night, *Black-ish* aired an episode titled “Hope” that exemplified why diversity is so important in entertainment. Within its short 30 minutes, a tough and divisive issue was handled with intelligence and depths of which hour-long shows typically seem incapable of achieving. I submit that this was all made possible by a creator and writers who can speak from personal experience and a cast that can deliver from the same place.

The episode didn't stop with a surface discussion of police brutality. Instead, it delved deeper and raised discussion around “the talk” with children about brutality and protests. The genius of the episode, however, was the counterpoints Dre and Rainbow took. While Rainbow took the more conservative, and hopeful position, Dre spoke for the black anger that burns deep inside of us that we have been forced to coexist with. They were personifications of so many things: positivity and despair, old school and new school, compassion and passion.

This extended into their children, as Junior wanted to join the protests, Zoe was overcome with the frustration of it all, and the twins were just too young to even understand what was happening. Still, they were stuck in the middle between the need for self-preservation and fighting for the preservation of future generations. This is one of the most devastating aspects of blackness, often having to choose between your own health and prosperity and that of your children and those to come.



The sitcom Black-ish addresses serious issues related to race and racism.

Voices

(continued)



Continued

But even in all of the darkness, there was a tragic, brilliant beauty to it all. And having this displayed in such a public and truthful manner was restorative.

It was an unabashed and unbridled acknowledgment of the struggle that communicated our shared struggle nationwide. This is what good TV looks like. This is the power of diversity in entertainment. This is why representation is important. And I like to believe that, for non-minority viewers, their perception of the unrest across the nation has been shifted at least a little.

Source: Jackson 2017.

Portrayals of Latinos/as

Latinos/as are both underrepresented and misrepresented in American media (Monk-Turner, Heiserman, Johnson, Cotton, and Jackson 2010; Smith et al. 2016). In a study of prime-time television during March 2007, Monk-Turner and colleagues found that overall, Latinos were the group most likely to be portrayed negatively on television (2010). For example, the researchers’ analyses revealed that none of the Latino characters were depicted as articulate, whereas 25 percent of black and 30 percent of white characters were (see Figure 5-1). Half of all African American actors were depicted as intelligent, whereas 43 percent of white actors were. Half of all African American actors were depicted as intelligent,

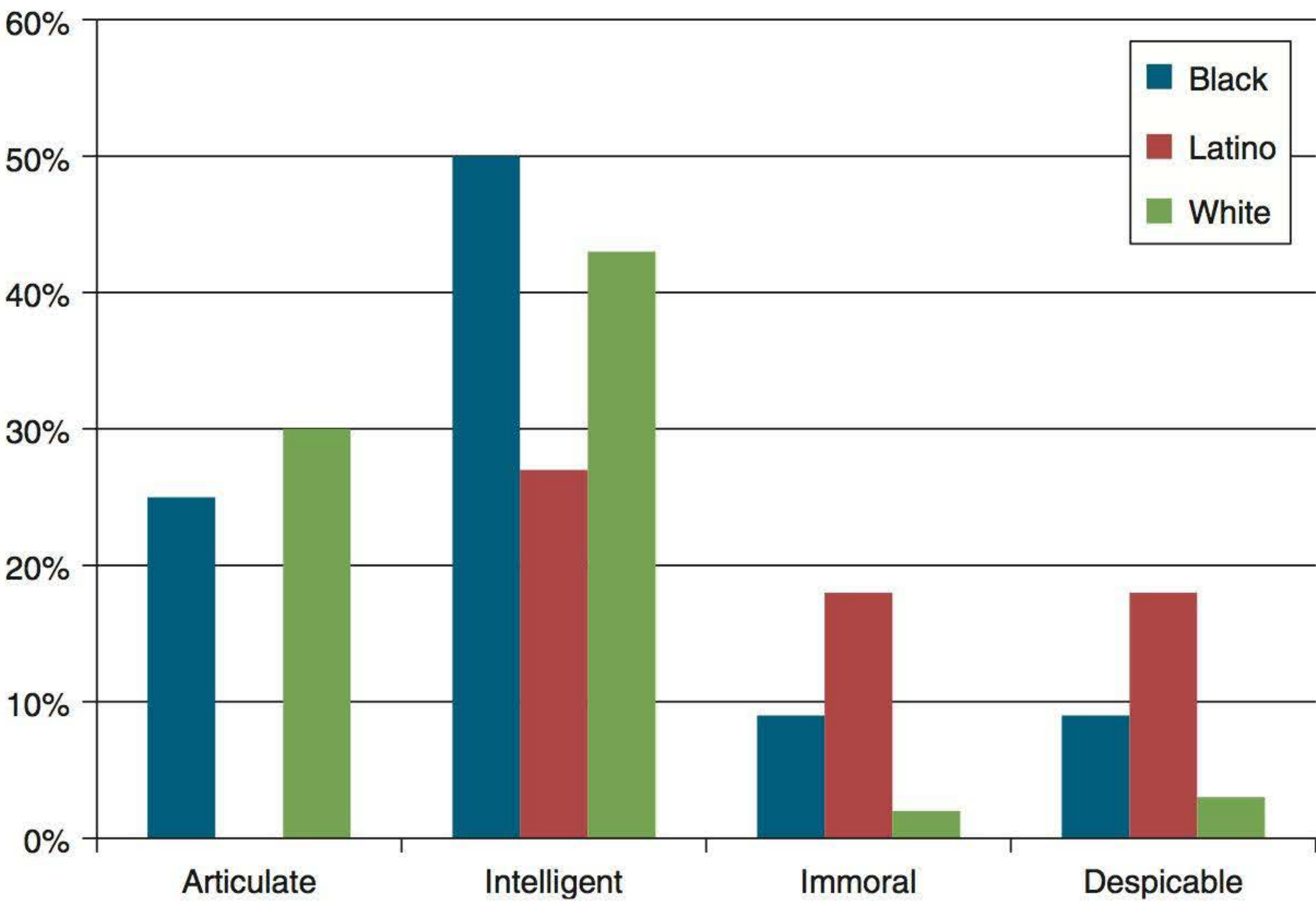


FIGURE 5-1.
Representations of Blacks,
Latinos/as, and Whites on
Television

Source: Monk and Turner (2010).

compared with 43 percent of whites and 27 percent of Latinos. Finally, the researchers found that only 2 percent of white actors were portrayed as immoral, compared with 18 percent of Latinos, and 3 percent of whites were portrayed as despicable, compared with 18 percent of Latinos.

In 2013, Latinos were notably absent from significant roles in the American media. There was not a single Latino with a leading role in the top ten movies and scripted network TV shows. There were no Latinos among the top ten television show creators, and Latinos constituted just 1.1 percent of producers, 2 percent of writers, and 4.1 percent of directors. Finally, only one Latina ranked among the top 53 television, radio, and studio executives (Negrón-Muntaner 2014).

Latino men are often stereotyped into specific roles: gangbanger, bandit, drug trafficker, police officer, janitor, gardener, and the Latin lover. Latinas are most likely to be portrayed as either hot-blooded women anxious for sexual fulfillment or maids anxious to please (Rodríguez 1997). The long-running show *Desperate Housewives* (2004–2012) played strongly to Latino/a stereotypes. In this show, Gabrielle Solis was an unfaithful wife who could not keep her hands off of the sixteen-year-old gardener. She constantly used her sex appeal in attempts to manipulate her husband, Carlos, in addition to other men. Carlos appeared at first to be a loving husband but turned out to be a criminal and was sent to prison. Debra Merskin (2007) suggests that the show perpetuated three stereotypes of Latinas in particular: (1) the **Cantina Girl**, a Latina as an available sexual object; (2) the **Suffering Señorita**, a Latina who suffers physical harm while protecting her Anglo love interest; and (3) the **Vamp**, a Latina who uses devious plotting to get her way.

Prime-time American television shows starring Latinos/as are few and far between, although this has been changing over the past few years. One of the first shows to feature Latinos/as in a positive and nuanced light was *Ugly Betty*, which made its debut in 2006 and ran for four seasons. Based on the Colombian soap opera *Yo Soy Betty, La Fea*, it was the story of a young Latina from Queens who endeavored to make it in the publishing industry. The main character, Betty Suarez, was given considerable depth and was quite likable. Her family, however, fit well into the stereotypes that many Americans have about Latinos/as. Her father was in the United States illegally and had escaped Mexico wanted for murder, her sister was a single mother who dressed provocatively, and the family lived in Queens in a clearly working-class household.

The main problem with Latino/a representation in entertainment continues to be underrepresentation. Given such a limited variety of representations, it is difficult to avoid stereotypes.

Cantina Girl A stereotype of a Latina as an available sexual object.

Suffering Señorita A stereotype of a Latina who suffers physical harm while protecting her Anglo love interest.

Vamp A stereotype of a Latina who uses devious and cunning stratagems to get what she wants.



▲ *Jane the Virgin* features a mostly Latino/a cast and breaks from stereotypical portrayals.

The show *Jane the Virgin*, which debuted in 2014, breaks from some of these representational patterns. It centers on a Latino family, made up of three generations: twenty-three-year-old Jane; her thirty-nine-year-old mother, Xiomara; and her grandmother, Alba. Nearly all the main characters in the show are Latino/a. Whereas Xiomara is cast as a sexy Latina, Alba performs the role of the sweet *abuelita* (grandma). Despite these (and other) tropes, the show is able to dig deeper into these roles and presents a complex view of a Latino family. In a twist, the primary villains in the show are not Cuban cartels or the Mexican mafia, but eastern European mobsters. As of 2017, *Jane the Virgin* had been renewed for its fourth season.

Portrayals of Arabs and Arab Americans

Although nearly 3.7 million Americans trace their roots to an Arab country and nearly 82 percent of Arabs in the United States are citizens (Arab American Institute 2017), Arabs are overwhelmingly portrayed on American television as foreign. Arab women are usually seen veiled or as exotic figures, and Arab men as terrorists or billionaires. In very recent years, this portrayal has begun to change, and we now occasionally see Arab Americans on prime-time television, often as the targets of racial discrimination. Evelyn Alsultany (2008) points out that in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, some television shows took up the question of whether it was fair to discriminate against Arab or Muslim Americans in the name of national security. Alsultany contends that this representation leads to the conclusion that Americans have to choose between protecting the nation and discriminating against Arabs and Arab Americans (who are, according to the subtext, prone to being dangerous). Although more nuanced than previous representations of Arab men, this representation ultimately reinforces the idea that Arabs are terrorists and thus that it is legitimate to discriminate against them in the name of national security.

The trope of Muslims as terrorists continues to be prevalent in American television. In a recent article about the television series *Homeland* in *Salon*, Laila Al-Arian writes: “*Homeland* leaves little doubt that, regardless of the other red herring motivations of justice and psychological manipulation, it is being Muslim that makes someone dangerous.” In addition to portraying most Arab or Muslim terrorists on the show as terrorists or terror suspects,

Homeland also presents a distorted view of the Middle East. *Homeland* portrays Beirut as a backwards, crumbling city when, in reality, Beirut is a modern, cosmopolitan city full of cafes, nightclubs, and clothing stores. The portrayal of the city angered Lebanese officials to the point that they threatened a lawsuit (Al-Arian 2012).

Why We Hacked *Homeland*

In this excerpted blog post, three artists—Heba Amin, Caram Kapp, and Don Karl (a.k.a Stone)—explain why they “hacked” an episode of Homeland by painting graffiti with their own message. Their intervention was broadcast in Season 5, Episode 2.

[*Homeland*] has garnered the reputation of being the most bigoted show on television for its inaccurate, undifferentiated and highly biased depiction of Arabs, Pakistanis, and Afghans, as well as its gross misrepresentations of the cities of Beirut, Islamabad- and the so-called Muslim world in general. [Over several seasons], *Homeland* has maintained the dichotomy of the photogenic, mainly white, mostly American protector versus the evil and backwards Muslim threat. *The Washington Post* reacts to the racist horror of the season four promotional poster by describing it as “white Red Riding Hood lost in a forest of faceless Muslim wolves.” In this forest, Red Riding Hood is permitted to display many shades of grey—bribery, drone strikes, torture, and covert assassination—to achieve her targets. She points her weapon of choice at the monochrome bad guys, who do all the things that the good guys do but with nefarious intent.

It cannot be disputed that the show looks good and is well acted and produced, as its many awards prove. But you would think that a series dealing so intensively with contemporary topics including the war on terrorism, ISIS, and ideological clashes between the US and the Middle East would not, for example, name a key terrorist character after the former real-life Pakistani ambassador to the United States. Granted, the show gets high praise from the American audience for its criticism of American government ethics, but not without dangerously feeding into the racism of the hysterical moment we find ourselves in today. Joseph Massad, Associate Professor of Modern Arab Politics and Intellectual History at Columbia University, addresses this deep-[seated] racism of American media towards the Middle East: “*Homeland* hardly deviates from this formula [of racist programming], except to add that Arabs are so dangerous that even all-American White men can be corrupted by them and become equally dangerous to America.”

At the beginning of June 2015, we received a phone call from a friend who has been active in the Graffiti and Street art scene in Germany for the past 30 years and

(continued)

Voices.

voices

Continued



Asked to help add authenticity to the show Homeland, artists spraypainted the graffiti message above in Arabic, which translates to Homeland is racist. The message appears in the background of a scene in Season 5.

has researched graffiti in the Middle East extensively. He had been contacted by *Homeland*'s set production company who were looking for "Arabian street artists" to lend graffiti authenticity to a film set of a Syrian refugee camp on the Lebanese/Syrian border for their new season. Given the series' reputation we were not easily convinced, until we considered what a moment of intervention could relay about our own

and many others' political discontent with the series. It was our moment to make our point by subverting the message using the show itself.

In our initial meeting, we were given a set of images of pro-Assad graffiti—apparently natural in a Syrian refugee camp. Our instructions were: (1) the graffiti has to be apolitical, (2) you cannot copy the images because of copyright infringement, and (3) writing "Mohamed is the greatest, is okay of course." We would arm ourselves with slogans, with proverbs allowing for critical interpretation, and, if the chance presented itself, blatant criticism directed at the show. And so, it came to be.

Dragon Lady A stereotype of an Asian woman as a sinister, crafty, and destructive seductress.

Butterfly A stereotype of an Asian woman who is a demure, devoted, and submissive wife.

Portrayals of Asians and Asian Americans

Darrell Hamamoto (1994) analyzed representations of Asians and Asian Americans on television between 1950 and 1990 and found that Asian men were often represented as foreign, sinister, unidimensional, effeminate characters. But whereas Asian men are often presented in U.S. media as asexual or effeminate, Asian women are often portrayed as hypersexual. Asian women are presented primarily in two ways: as the **Dragon Lady** or as the **Butterfly** (Rajgopal 2010). The Dragon Lady is a sinister, crafty, and destructive seductress. The Butterfly is a demure, devoted, submissive wife who is eager to please whites and men in general.

More recently, some gains have been made in the representation of Asian women on television. One example is Dr. Christina Yang, a central character in *Grey's Anatomy*. Yang is a beautiful and competent doctor. Her character has substantial depth and defies the “generic Asian” stereotype by making it clear she is both Korean American and from Beverly Hills—not Korea. However, as Rajgopal (2010) points out, Christina Yang’s character does not have the feminine qualities of white characters in the show, such as Meredith Grey. She remains enigmatic and cold, showing hints of the Dragon Lady stereotype as well as the “inscrutable Oriental” stereotype. Another important example is *Fresh Off the Boat*, which premiered in 2015. Notably, it is the first prime-time American sitcom in two decades to focus on an Asian American family. Unlike previous shows featuring Asian Americans, *Fresh Off the Boat* offers a cast of characters who are dynamic, stylish, and engaging.

The 2016 release of the Netflix original series *The Iron Fist* led to heated debates about Asian representations on television. Finn Jones—a white actor known for his role in *Game of Thrones*—was cast as the show’s central character, Danny Rand. In the show, which is based on a Marvel comic, Rand is a wealthy heir who returns to New York City fifteen years after being presumed dead in a plane crash. Warrior monks had taken him, and he had become their best martial arts student, vowing to fight a transnational Asian crime organization upon his return. As is typical of comic book stories, Rand is a white savior figure. The critiques of this series focus on casting a white man instead



< *Fresh Off the Boat* features characters who are dynamic, stylish, and engaging. It is the first prime-time American sitcom in two decades to focus on an Asian American family.

of an Asian American as Danny Rand. In 2014, blogger Kevin Chow wrote an open letter to Marvel asking them to cast an Asian as Danny Rand because doing so would remove the white savior aspect from the story and replace cultural appropriation with cultural reconnection. The directors did consider this possibility, and Lewis Tan—who is biracial (Chinese and white)—was a top contender for the lead role. Nevertheless, they chose Jones and missed an opportunity to raise the visibility of Asian American actors (Lee 2017).

Portrayals of Native Americans

In the early years of the United States, when white settlers were endeavoring to take over Indian lands in the newly formed nation, Native Americans were most popularly depicted as savages. Over time, the “captivity narrative”—in which white women and children were captured by savage natives—became a staple in American fiction throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Alongside this depiction of Native Americans as primitives and savages, an alternative depiction emerged: that of the Native American wise man or medicine man. Depictions of Native American men thus tend to fall into either of the two categories of the savage or the wise man (Bird 1999; Kopacz and Lawton 2011a; White 2012).

In popular culture in the United States, Native American men are often stereotyped to serve whites. At one end of the spectrum is the eroticized, nearly naked Native American who gives white women sexual pleasure or who is the object of white women’s illicit lust. At the other end of the spectrum is the wise Native American man, who is often a stoic loner and who gives his best spiritual advice to white heroes. In both cases, sexuality and family life among Native Americans is largely invisible (Bird 1999).

Representations of Native American women also tend toward a duality: as either a princess or a lustful savage. Pocahontas is the quintessential representation of a Native American woman: she is beautiful, erotic, noble, and fully dedicated to her white lover. At the other extreme is the squaw, who has sex indiscriminately with both whites and Indians (Kopacz and Lawton 2011a). Similar to depictions of Native American men, these depictions are from a white point of view. Native American male and female characters often have the primary purpose of serving white interests—by providing sexual satisfaction, as well as intimate knowledge of nature and other sacred things, and by helping convince other Native Americans of the importance of assimilation (Bird 1999).

In a survey of Native American stereotypes on television, Frederick White (2012) found that television producers almost exclusively show

Native Americans as shamans, wise men, sidekicks, princesses, and matriarchs. Today, Native Americans are most commonly represented on television in brief appearances on popular sitcoms. In these appearances, Native Americans are usually presented as the stereotypical wise men who offer advice to white protagonists (Tahmahkera 2008). There are very few representations of Native Americans on television as recurring main characters. And although other groups have seen breakthroughs with the success of *Jane the Virgin*, *Fresh Off the Boat*, and *Empire*, the same has not been true for Native Americans, who are notably absent in prime-time television.

Racial Stereotypes in Peruvian Television

Until 2015, a Peruvian television station featured a popular show on prime time called *The Humor Special*. “Negro Mama (black Sucker),” a central character on the show, was played by a white man—Jorge Benavides—wearing blackface and a prosthetic enlarged nose and lips. The character was from humble origins, and the show made fun of her lack of social and intellectual acumen. Each evening, Peruvians across the country would sit down and laugh at Negro Mama. Upon viewing this portrayal, African American scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr., responded: “I can’t believe it. That’s disgusting. . . . I have seen some racist things on television. . . . I have never seen anything as racist as Negro Mama.”

The Humor Special also featured “La Paisana Jacinta” (Jacinta the Peasant), another character played by Benavides. La Paisana Jacinta was a stereotypical representation of an Andean woman who had migrated to Lima in search of economic betterment. The show ridiculed her gullibility and lack of social skills. Peruvian activists such as Monica Carillo Zegarra, president of the Afro-Peruvian organization LUNDU, criticized *The Humor Special* and demanded it be taken off the air (La Republica 2010). Yet proponents of the show insisted that it had purely humoristic intent and should not be read as offensive.

The show was finally taken off the air in 2015, not in response to criticism of its racist imagery but because it had run its course.



Jorge Benavides in drag and brownface, playing “La Paisana Jacinta” in Peru’s “Humor Special.”

NEW MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS

In 2013, the amount of time Americans spent online surpassed television viewing for the first time—the average adult spent five hours per day online (eMarketer 2013). By 2016, Americans spent an average of 10 hours and 39 minutes each day using smartphones, tablets, television, radio, computers, or video games (Associated Press 2016). Many of the same stereotypes prevalent in television are also apparent in video games and social media.

Video Games

About 91 percent of children between the ages of two and seventeen regularly play video games (Reisinger 2011). Instead of being passive viewers, video game players are actively engaged and thus potentially more susceptible to stereotypes. Anna Everett and S. Craig Watkins (2008) carried out a study in which they explored how youths' interactions with video games affected how they thought about race. The researchers argue that the interactive nature of the games enhances the potential for the games not only to perpetuate stereotypes but also to counter them. Additionally, as technology has improved and permitted video games to be more realistic, game creators have been able to produce what they perceive to be more real and authentic places in video games. This increased realism has led, for example, to the creation of urban spaces that are dominated by African American and Latino young men.

Studies of video games have revealed consistent stereotyping—Latinos are overrepresented in sports games, Asians are almost exclusively portrayed in fighting games, and Arabs are typically portrayed as targets of violence (Saleem 2008; Burgess, Dill, Stermer, Burgess, and Brown 2011). A study of video games by Melinda Burgess and her colleagues (2011) revealed that black characters were more likely to be portrayed as thugs, athletes, and gun-toting figures than white characters. Burgess and colleagues also found that black women were largely absent from video games.



▲ Student Emma Halling's monologue "I Am Not Trayvon Martin" went viral on YouTube.

Social Media

While for the most part, only corporations have the means to produce widely distributed films, television shows, and video games, individuals can produce and consume social media. In the United States, it is easy to create a Twitter account or YouTube video. For example, in 2012, one of the students in my sociology class posted a video on YouTube called "I Am Not Trayvon Martin," which quickly went viral. Her statement is just one example of how social media allow people with low budgets and few connections to spread a message.

Social media have the power to counter stereotypes, not just reinforce them. But how often does this happen? Are people using social media to counter stereotypes, or are they simply reproducing them?

research focus

Kimberlé Crenshaw on Black Women's Lives Matter

At the 2016 American Sociological Association meeting, Kimberlé Crenshaw spoke on a plenary panel entitled "Protesting Racism." Midway through her presentation, Crenshaw asked all audience members to stand. She then told the audience, which included hundreds of sociologists, that she was going to read a list of names. She instructed the audience to remain standing until they heard a name they did not recognize. She began to read the list:

Mike Brown
Eric Garner
Tamir Rice
Freddie Gray
Alton Sterling
Philando Castille

At that point, most people in the room were still standing, as the police killings of these six unarmed black men had been widely discussed on social media. She continued:

Mya Hall

At this point, the vast majority of the people in the room took a seat. Mya Hall is a transgender woman who was killed after accidentally driving into the National Security Agency headquarters in Baltimore in 2015. Crenshaw then read more names:

Tanisha Anderson
Natasha McKenna
Aura Russer
Jessica Williams
Meagan Hockaday

By this point, nearly everyone in the audience was seated.

(continued)

These unarmed black women were all killed by police within days or weeks of the men on the list. Crenshaw pointed out that most people have not heard of the women's names because the issue of police brutality has been framed as an issue pertaining only to black men. Nevertheless, police officers have killed black women, girls, and femmes, and it is a tremendous oversight to ignore their deaths.

Crenshaw explained:

There were no mass demonstrations over the death of Natasha McKenna, even though her institutionalized killing at the hands of six officers, who swarmed, shackled, hooded, and tasered her four times, was filmed and released to the public, supposedly to affirm the claim that the officers operated in an entirely professional manner. Virtually no one knows the name of Tanisha Anderson, who was killed by the Cleveland police a little more than a week before the tragic death of Tamir Rice. There's been no sustained advocacy for Mya Hall, who in Baltimore was killed by the NSA just days before Freddie Gray.

Even though the movement in response to police killings has mobilized under the slogan of "black lives matter," it has not encompassed the experiences of women.

For Discussion

1. Why has the killing of black women received much less attention than that of black men?
2. Have you noticed any differences in the coverage of police killings of black men versus women?

Source: Crenshaw 2016.

meme An idea, image, video, or phrase that spreads in a culture, particularly via social media.

One phenomenon worthy of exploration is the racial **meme**, an idea, image, video, or phrase that spreads in a culture, particularly via social media. Memes can be an effective way to get messages across because they are easy to digest and can be widely shared across a variety of social media platforms, from Twitter to Facebook to Instagram to Snapchat. The meme shown in this section plays on stereotypes and may help people see their own biases.

Social media often afford some degree of anonymity to those who wish to propagate and validate racial stereotypes. Sociologist Jessie Daniels studies online hate speech and has found that people in the United States who have created websites with overt hate speech often go unpunished. In many cases, these website creators are protected by free speech laws and can post overtly racist messages on their own site without facing any legal trouble. Daniels (2008)

also has found “cloaked” websites that seek to deceive Web users by appearing to have a neutral stance but actually give false information supporting a white supremacist outlook. One example of such a website is www.martinlutherking.org, which at first glance appears to be a tribute to civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but in fact aims to undermine him and other civil rights leaders.

Twitter and other social media platforms can be used to debate racial issues. In 2012, the much-awaited film *The Hunger Games* was released, based on the novel with the same title. The movie was a box-office success and exceeded expectations. However, some viewers were surprised about the race of the characters and made their feelings public. In the book, author Suzanne Collins describes several of the main characters as having “dark brown skin.” When viewers went to the premiere and saw that several of the main characters were African American—Amandla Stenberg as Rue, Lenny Kravitz as Cinna, and Dayo Okeniyi as Thresh—some were disappointed and made their views known on Twitter:

“why does rue have to be black not gonna lie kinda ruined the movie”

“for the record, im still pissed that rue is black”

“rue is too black for what I pictured”

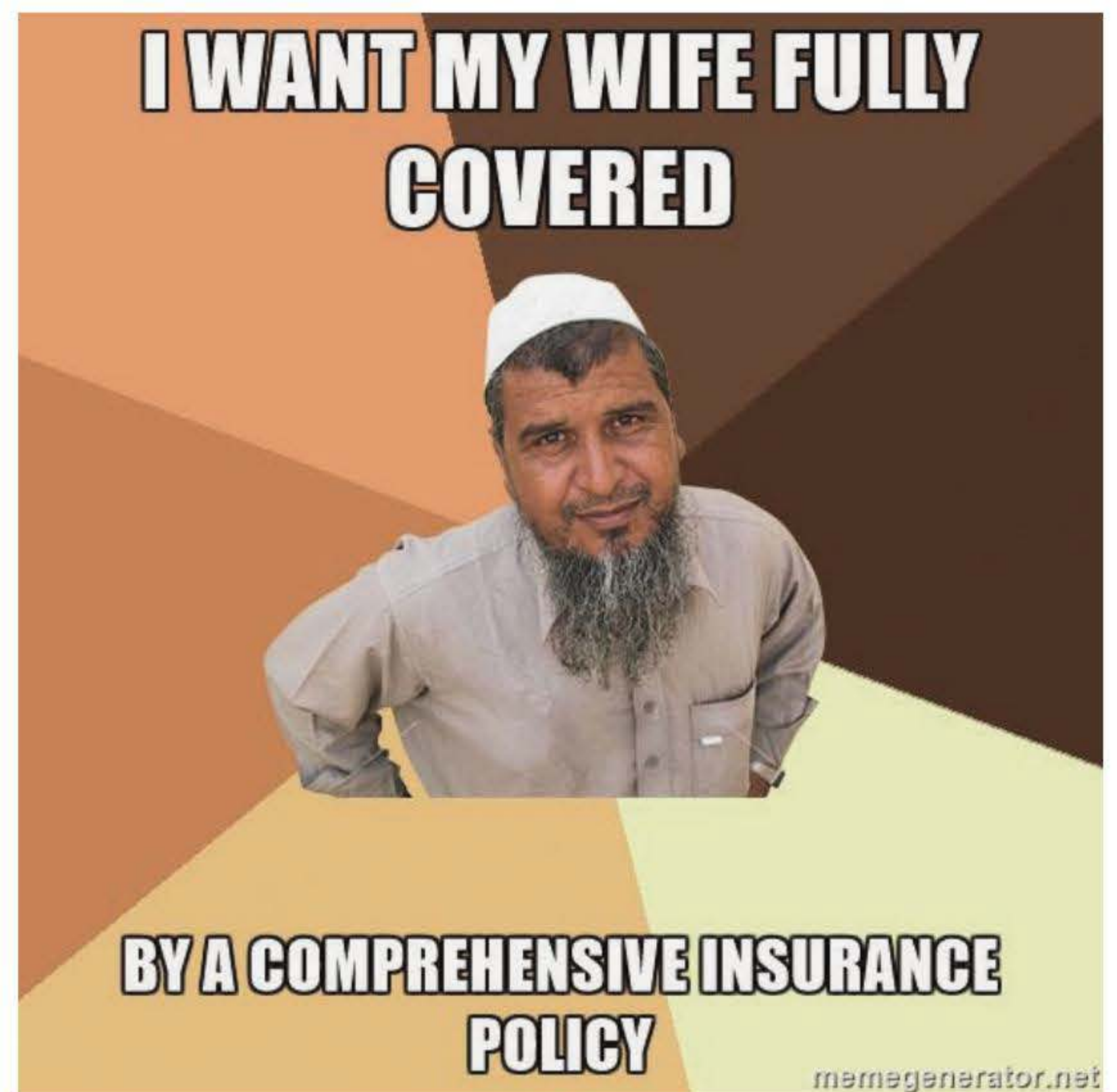
“call me racist but when i found out rue was black her death wasn’t as sad”

“why did the producer make all the good characters black smh [shaking my head]”

“ewwww rue is black?? I’m not watching”

“awkward moment when Rue is some black girl and not the little blonde innocent girl you picture”

These tweets make it evident that some viewers would like to keep their heroes white. These viewers were able to share their ways of thinking via social media. However, these tweets soon caught the attention of bloggers, who called them out.



▲ Memes such as this make fun of stereotypes.

In contrast, some social media responses and campaigns can lead to positive changes, as we saw leading up to the 2017 Academy Awards. In 2015, the four acting categories included only white nominees. Activist April Reign started the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite in response, but in 2016, these four categories were again all white. This time, however, the hashtag went viral and caught the attention of Hollywood. Filmmaker Spike Lee, actress Jada Pinkett, and others announced they would be boycotting the ceremony. As a result of the outcry, in June 2016 the Academy extended 683 new membership invitations, 41 percent of which went to people of color. In 2017, the Oscar nominations and winners reflected much greater diversity—the winners of two of the four Oscars given to actors were African Americans. This represents a remarkable turn in the history of the Oscars. Additionally, Dev Patel was the first actor of Indian descent to be nominated in 13 years, and Mahershala Ali was the first Muslim actor to ever win an Oscar (*The Times of India* 2017). Nevertheless, no actor of indigenous, Latino/a, or Asian descent has won an Oscar in the past 16 years (Yuen 2016).

As another positive example of the power of social media, a study by Maria Kopacz and Bessie Lee Lawton (2011b) found that YouTube videos have the potential to counteract stereotypes. The researchers assessed audience reactions to user-generated videos featuring Native Americans. Although viewers preferred videos that adhered to stereotypical depictions, they also had a positive response to videos that countered stereotypes and offered accurate depictions of Native American tribal diversity and activism. This study suggests that social media can work in positive ways to counter stereotypes. Resistance to and reproduction of racial stereotypes in new media is an emerging area of sociological inquiry, and future studies will further demonstrate how racial stereotypes are reproduced and contested in this realm.

MEDIA IMAGES AND RACIAL INEQUALITY

Pop culture representations of people of color have evolved over time, yet continue to propagate old racial ideologies. While the seventeenth-century representation of black men as lazy served to justify slavery, the current representation of black men as thugs serves to justify the astonishingly high rates of incarceration of black men today. And while the eighteenth-century representation of the black woman as sexually depraved served to justify the common practice of raping black women, the current representation of the “ho” in films and other media serves to justify cuts in social services to primarily black inner cities by deeming poor black women unworthy of such aid.

Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins argues that such justifications rely heavily on mass media representations of African Americans. She defines and describes a **new racism**, which reflects “the juxtaposition of old and new—in some cases, a continuation of long-standing practices of racial rule and, in other cases, the development of something original. The new racism reflects sedimented or past-in-present racial formations from prior historical periods” (2004, 55).

Modern-day representations of African Americans as thugs and whores are some examples of what Patricia Hill Collins calls **controlling images** (2004, 165), or raced, classed, and gendered media depictions of what African Americans are and are not. Throughout U.S. history, blacks have been represented as grotesque, physically resistant, and hypersexual. These representations create a fascination with blackness, but they also define what whites are not. In this way, every representation of nonwhites also defines whiteness. If blacks are represented as embodying physical strength, then whites can see themselves as embodying intelligence—brawn versus brain. The same could be said of stereotypes of other groups: for example, representations of Latinos as gangbangers and gardeners send the message that whites are not gangbangers or gardeners. These stereotypical representations not only shape how people in the United States view one another but also work to justify rampant inequalities.

Representations of Latinos as drug kingpins, gangbangers, and petty criminals serve to justify the disproportionate rates of imprisonment for Latinos. These sorts of media representations reinforce the idea that Latinos are prone to criminality. The representation of the Latina as possessing uncontrolled sexuality serves to justify cuts in welfare and restrictions on immigration. And the representation of Latinas as maids reinforces the idea that Latinas are destined for low-wage occupations. With the exception of the criminal, the majority of the representations of Latinos/as portray these individuals as being in service to whites or to the very system that exploits them. The Latin lover’s primary role is to sexually please white women. The hot-blooded Latina fulfills the sexual desires of her lovers and the fantasies of others. The maid and the gardener keep the well-to-do neighborhoods looking nice. And the law enforcement officials keep the streets safe for everyone.

Portrayals of Arabs and Muslims propagate Islamophobia, promote Orientalist stereotypes, and work to justify foreign interventions. Hollywood has played an important role in portraying the Arab world as an exotic place that requires white Westerners to civilize its people and drag them into the twenty-first century. Shoba Sharad Rajgopal argues that representations of Arab women as veiled, traditional, and oppressed work to reinforce the stereotype that Western culture is “dynamic, progressive, and egalitarian,” whereas Arab

new racism Current reflections of racial formations from prior historical periods.

controlling images Raced, classed, and gendered media depictions of what African Americans are and are not.

cultures are “backward, barbaric, and patriarchal” (2010, 145). She further contends that these stereotypes reinforce the idea that Americans need to go to Iraq and Afghanistan to rescue women from themselves and, in particular, from their brutal and oppressive Arab husbands.

Insofar as media depictions shape our perceptions and portray white characters as having more depth and redeeming qualities, they work to justify the fact that whites tend to do better in American society on nearly any social measure. In a similar fashion, the depiction of Americans as saviors of the world helps to shape our perception of the United States as the beacon of democracy, even as the U.S. military wreaks havoc on Iraq and Afghanistan.

RACED, CLASSED, AND GENDERED MEDIA IMAGES

As we have seen increasing numbers of people of color in popular culture, we have also become able to find a variety of representations across class lines. African Americans, for example, are no longer portrayed only as mammies or con artists. Instead, many are doctors and lawyers. Portrayals of people of color on television are raced, gendered, and classed—meaning that the representations vary by race, class, and gender, and that they influence how we think about various racial groups in this country. Patricia Hill Collins’s (2004) concept of “controlling images” argues that the media produces class- and gender-specific depictions of people of African descent in popular culture. She further contends that “mass media has generated class-specific images of Black women that help justify and shape the new racism of desegregated, color-blind America.” Collins’s analysis of the representations of black men and women in popular culture is useful, and I describe it in detail later in this chapter. In addition, Collins’s idea of controlling images can be extended to other groups, including Latinos/as, Native Americans, Asians, and Arabs.

Collins maintains that the vast majority of representations of blacks on television fall into the raced and classed categories presented in Table 5-1.

Collins argues that these images influence how blacks treat each other and how others treat them. However, this does not mean that these images *determine* how blacks are treated. Instead, their pervasive nature means that they affect all people in our society. Faced with these images, we can: (1) internalize them and accept them as reality, (2) resist them and develop our own ideas about black masculinity and femininity, or (3) ignore them. Any of these reactions requires some action on our part and will affect how we think of ourselves and others.

Collins primarily restricted her analyses to African Americans. The idea of controlling images can be applied to other groups, however, as it is evident that

TABLE 5-1
Raced and Classed Categories of Black Representations on Television

	Working Class	Middle Class
WOMEN	BITCH: Aggressive, loud, rude, and pushy	MODERN MAMMY: Loyal female servant; focuses on work and subservience to white male boss
	BAD BITCH: Materialistic, sexualized; iconized in hip-hop culture; modern version of the Jezebel	BLACK LADY: Designed to counter images of black women's promiscuity; focuses on the home
	BAD BLACK MOTHER: (BBM): Mother who neglects her children; characterized by bad values; welfare queen	EDUCATED BLACK BITCH: Has money, power, and job; is beautiful; success depends on her being tamed by men
	FEMALE ATHLETE: Feminized; focuses on the family; lesbianism erased	
MEN	ATHLETE: Physically strong; harsh temper; needs to be controlled by coaches	SIDEKICK: Black buddy in service to whites; origins lie in Uncle Tom; loyal to whites; asexual, nonviolent, safe, nonthreatening
	THUG OR GANGSTA: Inherently physical and, unlike the athlete, his physicality is neither admired nor easily exploited for white gain	SISSY: Effeminate and derogated black masculinity; gay characteristics, a queen; reinforces heterosexuality of others
	BLACK PIMP: Involved in illegal activity; hustler; uses women for economic gain; refuses to work; promiscuous	
	BLACK RAPIST: Hypersexual, desirous of white women	

Source: Based on P. H. Collins 2004.

stereotypical representations vary by gender. Table 5-2 lists some examples of prominent gendered stereotypes of Arabs, Native Americans, Latinos/as, and Asians. As with African Americans, these controlling images account for the vast majority of representations of these groups. Moreover, each of these depictions also defines what whites are not. White men are not terrorists or savages; they are peaceful and civilized. White women are not exotic or hot-blooded; they are reserved and ethical.

Each of these representations is gendered. Arab women are rarely portrayed as terrorists, and men are almost always the perpetrators, not the victims, of gendered violence (Rajgopal 2010). Native American men are usually portrayed either as savages (cruel and primitive men who brutalize white people), as wise elders who use their knowledge to help whites, or as warriors who are romanticized but know that their tribe will ultimately meet its doom. In contrast, Native American women are usually portrayed as either princesses who

TABLE 5-2
Prominent Gendered Stereotypes by Racial/Ethnic Group

	Men	Women
ARABS	Terrorist Immoral billionaire Haggler	Veiled victim Exotic seductress Maiden
NATIVE AMERICANS	Savage Sidekick Wise elder Doomed warrior	Squaw Princess Matriarch
LATINOS/AS	Latin lover Greaser/bandito Gangbanger Gardener Buffoon	Hot-blooded Latina Maid <i>Abuela</i> (grandma) Mexican spitfire
ASIANS	Buddy Threatening foreigner Martial artist Corrupt businessman	Butterfly Dragon Lady

Source: Based on Rajgopal (2010); Kopacz and Lawton (2011a, 2011b); Rodríguez (1997).

fall in love with a white hero or as promiscuous squaws (Kopacz and Lawton 2011a). When Latino men on television are not involved in urban violence as either criminals or police officers, they are most likely to be found in unskilled labor occupations such as janitor or gardener. This portrayal of Latinos as subservient is complemented by the portrayal of the Latin lover, who, despite his success in meeting the sexual desires of the Anglo woman, ends up being the “Latin loser” when his lover is in turn conquered by an Anglo man (Rodríguez 1997). Latinas, in contrast, tend to be portrayed as hot-blooded women, maids, or *abuelas* (grandmothers) who are out of touch with modern life (Berg 1997). Asian women tend to be portrayed either as Dragon Ladies or as Butterflies, both of which highlight their sexuality. In contrast, Asian men are usually desexualized and emasculated. These gendered stereotypes reinforce prevalent stereotypes about people of color in the United States and also work to define whites as morally superior.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Within the television industry, debates over the representation of people of color often revolve around a sort of “chicken and egg” question: Do the media create or simply reflect popular stereotypes? For example, would a film that portrayed black women as demure intellectuals and white women as gang-bangers be unsuccessful because it would seem unrealistic?

The stereotypical portrayals we see in the media today certainly were not invented by the media. Instead, they are part of our history and were created decades or even centuries ago. In this chapter, we have seen both how these stereotypes have evolved and how they continue to be part and parcel of popular media. We have also seen some of the consequences of these stereotypes: how they work to reproduce and justify racial inequalities. This raises the question of whether the media have a responsibility to try to alter stereotypes.

One recurring complaint about representations of people of color in the media is that they lack the depth of white characters. One way that this portrayal could change would be by including more people of color as writers and producers of popular media. Shonda Rhimes, the creator of the popular series *Grey's Anatomy*, *Private Practice*, *Scandal*, and *How to Get Away with Murder*, is a prominent African American woman with a significant role in creating television shows in the United States. Rhimes's shows have garnered praise both for including more characters of color and for giving those characters more depth than we are used to seeing on other shows. Thus, with the inclusion of more people of color in Hollywood as creators of media, we will perhaps see fewer stereotypes.

However, one of the most prominent African American male showrunners is Tyler Perry, who is widely criticized for his use of stereotypical depictions of black women in his works, including *House of Payne*, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, *Madea Goes to Jail*, and many other television shows, films, and stage plays. Although Tyler Perry presumably has the ability to portray black women in a nuanced fashion, he is still beholden to the fact that the primary motive for the entertainment industry is making a profit. For Perry, it is clear that making fun of African Americans sells. In 2011, *Forbes* magazine named Tyler Perry the highest-paid man in entertainment—with five movies and two television series, Perry earned \$130 million between May 2010 and May 2011 (Pomerantz 2011). Perry's body of work shows that simply having black producers is not enough if the goal is to reduce stereotypes.

To return to the question of the media's responsibility for reproducing stereotypes, there are two sides to this issue. On the one hand, you could argue

that the media are responsible to the public, as the public constitutes their customer base. On the other hand, you could contend that the media are simply responding to market forces and giving their customers what they desire. What do you think?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

enlightened racism 132

Mammy 133

Sapphire 133

Jezebel 133

Cantina Girl 137

Suffering Señorita 137

Vamp 137

Dragon Lady 140

Butterfly 140

meme 146

new racism 149

controlling images 149

5.1 How are racial stereotypes propagated in popular culture? (pp. 129–143)

- Common stereotypes of various racial and ethnic groups are perpetuated on television and in other media.

Review

- » How have representations of African Americans changed since the 1950s?
- » What are some of the common stereotypes of Latinos/as, Asians, and Arab Americans on television?
- » What are the historical origins of stereotypical portrayals of Native Americans?

Critical Thinking

- » Television shows change constantly. Do the stereotypes mentioned in this chapter apply to the shows you currently watch? Why or why not? Pick two popular shows on television and assess the extent to which the nonwhite characters fit into stereotypical roles. Are the Latino/a characters portrayed as hypersexual? Are the Asians and Native Americans stoic? Describe at least two characters, and then assess the extent to which those characters fit into the controlling images for their group.

5.2 How have new media changed the way stereotypes are spread and countered? (pp. 144–148)

- Old stereotypes prevail even in new media such as video games and social media, which have an increasingly important influence.

Review

- » How do user-generated media affect the spread of stereotypes?

Critical Thinking

- » Do you think social media have the potential to counter racial stereotypes, or do you think they are simply providing an arena for the proliferation of stereotypes? Use at least one example from social media to make your case.

5.3 How do media images serve to justify racial inequality? (pp. 148–150)

- Media images are not harmless: they justify racial inequalities by shaping stereotypes about racial and ethnic minorities as well as about whites.

Review

- » Give an example of a stereotype from the media that is used to justify racial inequality.

Critical Thinking

- » To what extent are controlling images prominent in the media today?

5.4 How are media representations raced, classed, and gendered? (pp. 150–152)

- Media images vary not only by racial group but also by race and class.

Review

- » To what extent are controlling images prominent in the media today?
- » What are the historical origins of the “video ho” stereotype?

Critical Thinking

- » Why does Patricia Hill Collins argue that media representations are race-, class-, and gender-specific?

Talking about Race

The success of television shows and films is often dependent on word of mouth. If you watch a film or television show that breaks away from traditional stereotypes, you can talk to your friends and family about it and encourage them to watch it. When you have that conversation, you can refer to what you learned in this chapter about stereotypes and the importance of broad representation. You can also post your thoughts on social media and play a larger role in promoting media that avoid negative stereotypes.



Social Colorism. Noe Vicente. Oil on canvas, 39.4 × 39.4 in. (*by permission of Noe Vicente*)

6

Colorism and Skin-Color Stratification

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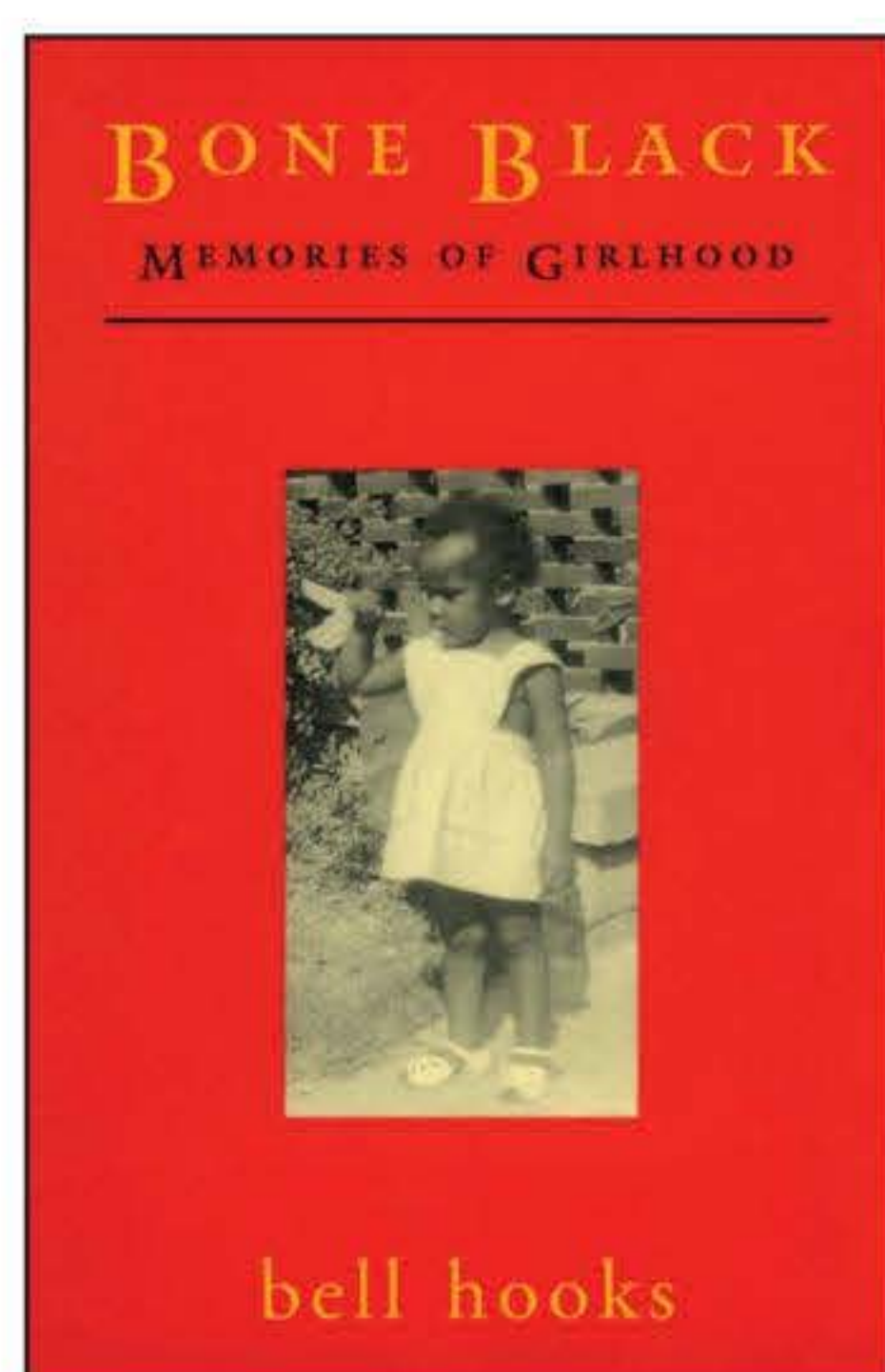
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As You Read

- 6.1 When and how did colorism and skin-color stratification originate?
- 6.2 How does colorism differ across societies?
- 6.3 How does skin color relate to gender and beauty?



Every morning, men and women around the world wake up and do something to their hair. Some women spend hours straightening it. Others simply pass their fingers through or over their cropped locks. Still others wear dreadlocks or braids. How we view and treat our hair is a consequence of both societal norms about how hair should look and the reality of the hair with which we are born. In *Bone Black*, bell hooks reflects on rituals surrounding hairstyling in her childhood and early adult years.

Good hair—that’s the expression. We all know it, begin to hear it when we are small children. When we are sitting between the legs of mothers and sisters getting our hair combed. Good hair is hair that is not kinky, hair that does not feel like balls of steel wool, hair that does not take hours to comb, hair that does not need tons of grease to untangle, hair that is long. Real good hair is straight hair, hair like white folk’s hair. Yet no one says so. No one says your hair is so nice, so beautiful because it is like white folk’s hair. We pretend that the standards we measure our beauty by are our own invention—that it is questions of time and money that lead us to make distinctions between good hair and bad hair. I know from birth that I am lucky, lucky to have hair at all for I was bald for two years, then lucky finally to have thin, almost straight hair, hair that does not need to be hot-combed.

We are six girls who live in a house together. We have different textures of hair, short, long, thick, thin. We do not appreciate these differences. We do not celebrate the variety that is ourselves. We do not run our fingers through each other’s dry hair after it is washed. We sit in the kitchen and wait our turn for the hot comb, wait to sit in the chair by the stove, smelling grease, feeling the heat warm our scalp like a sticky hot summer sun.

For each of us getting our hair pressed is an important ritual. It is not a sign of our longing to be white. It is not a sign of our quest to be beautiful. We are girls. It is a sign of our desire to be women. It is a gesture that says we are approaching womanhood—a rite of passage. Before we reach the appropriate age we wear braids and plaits that are symbols of our innocence, our youth, our childhood. Then we are comforted by the parting hands that comb and braid, comforted by the intimacy and bliss. There is a deeper intimacy in the kitchen on Saturday when hair is pressed, when fish is fried, when sodas are passed

around, when soul music drifts over the talk. We are women together. This is our ritual and our time. It is a time without men. It is a time when we work to meet each other's needs, to make each other beautiful in whatever way we can. It is a time of laughter and mellow talk. Sometimes it is an occasion for tears and sorrow. Mama is angry, sick of it all, pulling the hair too tight, using too much grease, burning one ear and then the next.

At first I cannot participate in the ritual. I have good hair that does not need pressing. Without the hot comb I remain a child, one of the uninitiated. I plead, I plead, I beg, I cry for my turn. They tell me once you start you will be sorry. You will wish you had never straightened your hair. They do not understand that it is not the straightening I seek but the chance to belong, to be one in this world of women. It is finally my turn. I am happy. Happy even though my thin hair straightened looks like black thread, has no body, stands in the air like ends of barbed wire; happy even though the sweet smell of unpressed hair is gone forever. Secretly I had hoped that the hot comb would transform me, turn the thin good hair into thick nappy hair, the kind of hair I like and long for, the kind you can do anything with, wear in all kinds of styles. I am bitterly disappointed in the new look.

Later, a senior in high school, I want to wear a natural, an Afro. I want never to get my hair pressed again. It is no longer a rite of passage, a chance to be intimate in the world of women. The intimacy masks betrayal. Together we change ourselves. The closeness is an embrace before parting, a gesture of farewell to love and one another.

Source: hooks 1996.

What you do or don't do with your hair each morning is a reflection of societal norms related to beauty, professional standards, and social worth. If you completely ignore your hair—never washing, combing, or cutting it—people likely will stare at you when you leave the house. The importance of hair, and the social value we give to certain hairstyles and not to others, are connected to ideologies about race, gender, class, and sexuality, as well as to **colorism**—an ideology related to and yet distinct from racism. Whereas racism relies on the belief that some races are better than others, colorism is the idea that, within races, lighter is better. Whereas racism divides people into discrete categories and judges them on that basis, colorism gives differential value to people in the same racial group, based on a continuum from light to dark. Colorism primarily refers to skin color, but it also encompasses physical characteristics that are related to skin color, such as eye color, hair color and texture, and facial features (Nakano Glenn 2009).

colorism The idea that, within races, lighter is better.

skin-color stratification A system in which resources such as income and status are distributed unequally according to skin color.

pigmentocracy A society in which blacks, Asians, and Latinos have different social statuses according to their skin color.

The prevalence of colorism has led to **skin-color stratification**, in which resources such as income and status are distributed unequally according to skin color. In the United States, lighter-skinned people generally have higher incomes and education than their darker-skinned counterparts and are more likely to own homes and marry. Darker-skinned people generally have longer prison sentences and lower job statuses on average than lighter-skinned people (Hochschild and Weaver 2007). Verna Keith and Cedric Herring (2001) found that lighter-skinned African Americans have advantages over their darker-skinned counterparts in terms of earnings, education, and occupations. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and David R. Dietrich (2009) contend that the United States is a **pigmentocracy**—a society in which blacks, Asians, and Latinos have different social statuses according to their skin color.

Skin-color stratification is also evident among immigrants to the United States from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Using data from the 2003 New Immigrant Survey, Joni Hersch (2008) found that darker-skinned immigrants generally earn less than their lighter-skinned counterparts. This nationally representative survey included interviews with people who had recently been granted legal permanent residence in the United States. Each interviewee's skin color was rated on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lightest and 10 the darkest. Overall, Hersch found that for immigrants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, light skin color is associated with higher wages across the spectrum. There is a pay disparity of 17 percent between the lightest-skinned immigrants and the darkest-skinned immigrants, even if we account for gender, education, English-language skills, visa type, and occupation. This pay disparity indicates that discrimination based on skin color likely does occur in the United States.

THE HISTORY OF COLORISM

When and how did colorism originate, not only in the United States but also around the world? Some scholars argue that the preference for light skin stems from the history of slavery and genocide in the Americas. Their argument is that the preference for light skin is fundamentally a preference for whiteness and thus that colorism has the same history as racism (Hunter 2005, 2007). For these thinkers, colorism is a modern phenomenon. Scholars who focus on Asia (Rondilla and Spickard 2007; Saraswati 2010, 2012) attribute the preference for light skin to earlier ideas that equated leisure with light skin and work with dark skin. Most scholars of colorism would agree that colorism is a global phenomenon, with a long history and distinct manifestations around the world.

research focus

Latino Immigrants and the U.S. Racial Order

Reanne Frank, Ilana Redstone Akresh, and Bo Lu (2010) carried out a study designed to measure the amount of skin-color discrimination Latino immigrants face in the labor market in the United States. They drew from a 2003 survey of about 1,000 Latino immigrants that included a measure of skin color. Frank and her colleagues used this statistical data to figure out whether skin color affects the earnings of Latinos in the United States. They found that, after accounting for relevant differences between dark- and light-skinned Latinos, darker-skinned Latinos earn, on average, \$2,500 less per year than their lighter-skinned counterparts.

This study used statistical techniques to account for a variety of factors that could influence income. Instead of simply comparing the incomes of dark- and light-skinned Latinos, Frank and her colleagues took into account the number of years the Latino immigrants had been in the United States, their age when they migrated, their gender, their occupational prestige, their region of origin, their years of education, and other factors associated with earnings. They found that, even accounting for all of these factors, lighter-skinned Latinos earn more than darker-skinned Latinos.

Frank and her colleagues argue that lighter-skinned Latinos earn more because they face discrimination in the labor market. They did not speak directly with employers to find out if they prefer lighter-skinned Latinos but they were able to infer, based on the relative earnings of light- and dark-skinned Latinos, that skin-color discrimination must be a factor in the labor market.

For Discussion

1. Do you think that Frank and her colleagues found evidence of skin-color stratification, colorism, or both? Explain your answer.
2. Why might some employers demonstrate a preference for lighter-skinned Latinos over darker-skinned Latinos?

Source: Frank, Akresh, and Lu 2010.

The Origins of Colorism in the Americas

Colorism has existed in the United States since the colonial era. The Africans who were brought to the North American colonies as slaves were primarily dark-skinned. Soon after the arrival of Africans in the Americas, the progeny

mulatto The progeny of blacks and whites; a class of mixed-race people who are darker than whites but lighter than blacks.

hypodescent The idea that having any amount of black ancestry makes you black.

of blacks and whites became a new class of mixed-race people, known as **mulattos**, who were darker than whites but lighter than blacks. At first, mulattos were officially recognized as a distinct category in the United States. In fact, the U.S. census included a mulatto category from 1850 to 1910. However, eventually both law and social custom changed, and **hypodescent**—the idea that having any amount of black ancestry makes you black—became more prevalent.

Each state had the authority to define which people would be classified as black. In some states, an individual was legally black if one of his or her grandparents was black (i.e., if he or she was one-quarter black). In other states, an individual was black if his or her great-grandparents were black. In still other states, an individual was considered black if he or she was one-thirty-second black. These laws were eventually abolished in the 1960s (Telles 2009). How-

ever, they have had a lasting impact, in that people with relatively little African ancestry (and thus very light skin) can be considered black. The existence of a wide color spectrum in the black community is one factor that has enabled colorism to flourish.

Skin-color stratification was prevalent during the era of slavery: lighter-skinned slaves were more likely to work in the house instead of the fields, to be taught to read, and to be manumitted (freed). The manumission of some led to a small class of freedmen, who tended to be lighter in skin tone than their enslaved counterparts. These lighter-skinned blacks eventually formed the core of the black elite in the United States; hence, skin color has been mapped onto social status in the African American community for centuries (Hunter 2005).

The association of light skin with elite status continued into the twentieth century. Jewish American anthropologist Melville Herskovits conducted a study of blacks in Harlem in the 1920s and found that the black elite was disproportionately light-skinned and that black men preferred light-skinned partners. His study revealed that whereas only 9 percent of the Harlem black elites were very dark-skinned, 28.9 percent of the elites were very light-skinned.



▲ In Harlem in the 1920s, the black elite were disproportionately light-skinned.

Herskovits also found that in over half of Harlem couples, wives were lighter than husbands, revealing that men often preferred lighter-skinned women and that women were able to marry higher-status darker-skinned men. Within the black community, lighter skin was valued more highly than dark skin. Additionally, light skin became associated with elite status. Thus, the desire to be light was connected both to the idea that white was better and to the idea that light skin meant higher class.

Consequently, skin bleaches and hair straighteners were very common in Harlem in the 1920s. Skin bleaches that promised to provide women with “light skin that men can’t resist” formed a substantial portion of the cosmetics products sold in Harlem at the time (Dorman 2011). The practice of skin bleaching persists today: Christopher A. D. Charles (2011) found that pharmacies and beauty supply stores in Harlem were still selling bleaching products in 2010. Moreover, the labels on these products devalued black skin by promising to help customers with “problems” associated with dark skin.

In Latin America, a skin-color hierarchy has existed for centuries. During the period that Latin American countries were Spanish colonies, the Spaniards developed an elaborate system of *castas* based on ancestry that determined one’s social and legal ranking in society. By the end of the colonial period in 1821, over one hundred possible categories were memorialized in a series of *casta* paintings. The categories included *españoles* (Spaniards), *indios* (indigenous people), *mestizos* (persons with one Spanish and one indigenous parent), *castizos* (persons with one *mestizo* parent and one Spanish parent), and *mulatos* (persons with one African parent and one Spanish parent). The categories went on to divide people into over one hundred different possible mixtures, each with its own name. These categories were based on ancestry, not color. Nevertheless, we can say that, generally, more Spanish ancestry meant both lighter skin and more prestige. These categories are no longer used in Latin America, but the inequalities that stemmed from them persist (Telles and Steele 2012).

mestizo A Latin American classification of people of European and indigenous ancestry.



▲ Over one hundred social categories can be identified in these *casta* paintings from the Spanish colonies.

pardo A Brazilian census category meaning “brown.”

Brazil, in contrast to the United States and Spanish America, never had a system of official classification whereby a person with a certain amount of African ancestry would be legally considered black. Instead, in Brazil, usually only a person who looks black is considered black, whereas a person who looks white is considered white, regardless of his or her actual ancestry. The Brazilian census classifies people as white, **pardo** (brown), and black, and the term *mulatto* [*mulato* in Portuguese] is used in everyday language to describe people who are neither black nor white. There is a certain amount of fluidity between these categories, and many families report blacks, whites, and *pardos* in their households on the Brazilian census. Although Brazil has never had laws that mandated racial segregation, racial inequality exists, and privilege is mapped along color lines, with lighter-skinned people generally having more education and income (Telles 2009). The presence of skin-color stratification in Brazil today is a relic of colonialism.

The Origins of Colorism in Asia and Africa

The preference for light skin in the Americas seems to have its roots in the period of colonization. In contrast, Asia has a longer history of colorism. As early as the late ninth century, the ancient Sanskrit text *Ramayana* featured light skin as ideal. Ayu Saraswati (2010) explains that in both the Indian and Indonesian versions of this text, beautiful women are described as having white faces that shine like the full moon. Aryan Indians spread their preference for white skin to the rest of South and Southeast Asia. In Indonesia, this predilection for light skin was reinforced during the Dutch colonial period in the nineteenth century. Colonial authorities granted preferential treatment to persons of mixed Dutch-Indonesian ancestry. When the Japanese became the colonial power in Indonesia in 1942, they also brought their fondness for lightness with them. And U.S. popular culture has made its mark in Indonesia through advertising, with blue-eyed blonds staring out of images in this primarily nonwhite country. In Indonesia today, dark-skinned people continue to be seen as unattractive and undesirable. As in other places, this social pattern has clear gendered dimensions: women feel more pressure than men do to alter their appearance and lighten their skin (Saraswati 2012).

What about preferences in Africa? Was there preference for light skin in this region prior to the arrival of Europeans? There are people of every skin shade on the African continent, with lighter-skinned people living in the north and those with darker skin living close to the Equator and in the south. Anthropologist Peter Frost (2006) has reviewed the evidence from several African tribes and found some evidence that a preference for lighter skin predates colonialism in Africa. In many tribes, women with brown or reddish skin are seen

as more beautiful than those with very dark skin, and there are indications that these preferences are deeply rooted in these societies. For example, the languages of many tribes include value-laden terms that distinguish between skin color, and early-twentieth-century anthropologists found preferences for lighter skin even among older Africans who were born before the arrival of Europeans in their communities (Frost 2006). Whether or not the preference for light skin predates colonialism is an unresolved question. However, it is clear that the obsession with light skin increased with colonization and the presence of large numbers of Europeans in Africa. In South Africa, for example, skin lighteners have been available since the 1930s (Thomas 2009).

The preference for light skin seems nearly universal. Despite varying local histories, these preferences have converged in the current era as a result of cultural globalization and the spread of transnational corporations that tend to promote whiter or lighter beauty ideals.

THE GLOBAL COLOR HIERARCHY

How does colorism differ across societies? Consider a 2016 commercial from Thailand for a product called Snowz, skin-whitening pills with the slogan “white makes you win.” In the television advertisement, Cris Horwang—a 35-year-old actress, model, singer, and dance teacher—explains that the whiteness she has achieved through beauty products has brought her fame. She says: “Before I got to this point, the competition was very high. If I stop taking care of myself, everything I have worked for, the whiteness I have invested in, may be lost.” As she is talking, a younger model comes onto the screen,



▲ In Thailand, a 2016 commercial for a skin-whitening pill called Snowz proclaimed, “Just being white, you will win.”

global color hierarchy A worldwide system in which white (or light) skin is privileged and people—especially women—strive to become lighter.

diaspora A dispersion of people from their original homeland.

and Cris's skin slowly fades to charcoal-black. She looks at her dark skin with despondence, and the narrator says, "Whiteness makes you win." The younger model smiles as the narrator adds that Snowz contains glutathione, derived from kiwi seeds which "helps you not return to black." After the Snowz pills appear on the screen, Cris turns white again, and smiles return to her face.

Skin-whitening products are prevalent not only in Asia but also in Latin America, Africa, and the United States. They are evidence of a **global color hierarchy**, in which white (or light) skin is privileged and people—especially, but not exclusively, women—strive to become lighter. These dynamics play out differently in distinct areas of the world.

In this section, we will examine three areas of the world: Asia, Latin America, and Africa, as well as the **diaspora**, or dispersion, of their populations in the United States.

Asia and Asian Americans

The privileging of light skin in Asia and among Asian Americans has its roots in ancient Aryan Indian beauty ideals, Japanese and Chinese ideas of white skin as a sign of leisure, and colonial domination of India and Indonesia by European powers. Today, women from Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam, Japan, China, the Philippines, Indonesia, and India use skin-whitening creams in an effort to make their skin as light as possible, and they even undergo eyelid surgery to widen their eyes (Saraswati 2010, 2012). In India, the preference for light skin is also connected to the caste system. Although it is not the case that all high-caste members (Brahmins) are light, a pattern can be seen whereby higher-caste people in India tend to be lighter than those of lower caste. In addition, the term for caste, *varna*, literally means "color," and there has been some historical association of Brahmins with whiteness and the untouchables with blackness. In India and across Asia, there are historical and present-day advantages associated with light skin, especially for women (Parameswaran and Cardoza 2009).

These preferences for light skin in Asia have carried over to Asian Americans in the United States. Research by Joanne Rondilla and Paul Spickard (2007) reveals a fascinating aspect of skin-tone discrimination among Asian Americans: the preference for light skin is omnipresent, yet Asian Americans do not want to be *too* white. The researchers tell the stories of a Vietnamese American woman who uses a destructive skin-whitening cream because she feels excluded by her ethnic group and a Filipina woman who stays out of the sun to avoid being called "dark." On the flip side, they also describe a Chinese woman whose great-grandmother was French who is

excluded from social groups because her freckles and reddish hair make her look too white, as well as a woman whose mother is Japanese and father is white who struggles to feel accepted in either community. Based on these interviews and other evidence, Rondilla and Spickard argue that light skin is preferred in Asian American communities, but that this does not signal a desire for whiteness.

The Fair-Skin Battle

I will admit: I've avoided the sun so I wouldn't get darker. I've gone swimming at night instead of during the day to avoid tan lines. It's completely and utterly ridiculous. I should enjoy the sun's warm rays and get some exercise! But where do these thoughts come from? We weren't born with the innate ability to distinguish between skin colors and assign meanings to them. But for some women, the fair skin battle draws them into deeper depths than just avoiding sunshine during the day.

In South Asian tradition, a light-skinned woman is supposedly more beautiful than a dark-skinned woman. This belief can be traced back to early invasions of India by the Turks and British. As light-skinned people inhabited India and wielded their authority, natives who sought power and beauty likened fair skin with power and status. Some say the Caste System also contributed to these attitudes, with light-skinned higher-caste members dominating the lower-caste members with darker skin. Additionally, history might indicate that lighter-skinned people enjoyed a more fanciful life, while darker-skinned people worked in the fields.

For an even more blatant and modern perpetuation of this stereotype, watch any Bollywood movie's actors and actresses. The movies tend to feature ultra-fair-skinned heroes and heroines, while villains and village women tend to be portrayed by darker-complexioned actors.

Can this be a realistic depiction of South Asian people? Do South Asian women strive to appear like the beautiful women seen in the movies? The majority of South Asians are not as fair skinned as the movies portray. They range in hues from ivory to caramel, from mocha to ebony.



A box of Fair & Lovely, a skin-lightening cream from New Delhi, India.

Voices

(continued)



Continued

(As a humorous side note, check out some of the matrimonial ads seeking fair maidens.)

Furthermore, the South Asian skin product market is littered with skin lightening products. Everything from our aunt's Fair and Lovely to our dermatologist's hydroquinone is being consumed for the purpose of a fair complexion. Some of these crèmes are harmful for the skin, and can lead to irritation. It's amazing to observe the lengths some women will go to, sometimes dangerous lengths, just to achieve a slightly lighter shade.

However, Fair and Lovely is now the topic of controversy in South Asia nowadays, where a movement led by the All India Democratic Women's Association finally begins to bring some justice to the issue of skin color.

This issue doesn't just concern South Asians. African American celebrities like Beyoncé, Rihanna, and Halle Berry are so beautiful and talented in their genres, but in all actuality, they're considerably fair! In fact, an MSNBC article posed the question of whether *Vanity Fair* lightened Beyoncé's skin for a cover photo (which they vehemently denied). A darker-skinned woman like Fantasia Barrino doesn't get nearly the same spotlight, despite her enormous talent. Some African American bloggers speak of similar sentiment concerning skin color in their communities as well.

It's clear that American Desi girls feel the fair-skin pressure because of the media coming at them from both sides of the world. Both Desi culture and American culture subconsciously allude towards the idea that a lighter complexion is more beautiful than a darker one. It's not easy living in a society where vanity and visual appearance speak volumes before a woman even speaks!

The vast diversity in our skin colors is just one of the visual aspects of our heritage. And there's so much wonder woven into our heritage to fret over skin color! So, feel free to bask in the sun and be proud of your glow!

Source: Mohideen 2009.

Latin America and Latinos/as

In Latin America, people of mixed ancestry have historically been considered mulattos (when they have African and European ancestry) or *mestizos* (when they have European and indigenous ancestry). *Mestizo* is an official classification in Mexico, Peru, and other countries, and *pardo* (brown) is an official classification in Brazil. Within this system, only people who are very dark-skinned are considered black, and only those who both are dark-skinned and display

indigenous cultural features are considered indigenous (Golash-Boza 2011a). Thus, you could find a family in which one child is considered black, another mulatto, and still another white. In these families, it is often the case that the lighter-skinned children are given preferential treatment (Twine 1998; Hodge-Freeman 2015). Latin Americans often strategically choose romantic partners who are lighter in skin tone than themselves, with the hope that their children will be lighter and thus better positioned in society. In Spanish, this strategy is called *mejorando la raza*, or improving the race, and is common across Latin America (Sue 2009).

Latin American countries are marked by a skin-color hierarchy, in which lighter-skinned people possess a disproportionate share of the resources. Because of the existence of intermediate categories, we can say that whites are often at the top of the hierarchy, mestizos and mulattos in the middle, and blacks and indigenous people at the bottom (Telles and Steele 2012).

Edward Telles and Liza Steele (2012) conducted a study in which they compared skin color and educational attainment across Latin America. They wanted to know whether or not lighter-skinned Latin Americans are more likely to complete high school and go to college than darker-skinned Latin Americans. Using a recent and innovative dataset that contained information about skin color and education for nearly 40,000 people in twenty-three Latin American countries, they were able to explore the relationship between skin color and each respondent's educational attainment. These data allowed them to ask if lighter-skinned people completed more years of schooling on average than darker-skinned people. In most Latin American and Caribbean countries, they found that lighter-skinned people were more likely to have higher educational attainment than darker-skinned people. This trend was most prominent in Andean countries such as Peru and Bolivia, where darker-skinned people receive an average of eight years of schooling, as compared to the thirteen years received by lighter-skinned people. In all the countries except four—Panama, Suriname, Belize, and Guyana—their study revealed that lighter-skinned people had more years of education than darker-skinned people. Educational attainment is an important indicator of socioeconomic success. Thus, this study makes it clear that a pigmentocracy continues to be prevalent in Latin America.

The prevalence of skin-color stratification in Latin America raises the question of whether this stratification is also present among Latin American immigrants in the United States. Do lighter-skinned Latinos in the United States have more education, income, and resources?

Having light skin has real, material rewards for Latinos in the United States in terms of education and income. Social scientists have conducted a few quantitative studies that measured skin color and tested whether light-skinned people tend to have higher incomes and education. In 1996, Edward Murguía and Edward Telles published a study based on the 1979 National Chicano Study. They found that whereas only 7 percent of light-skinned Mexican Americans had less than five years of schooling, 10.2 percent of them had finished college. By comparison, about 19 percent of medium- and dark-skinned Mexican Americans had less than five years of schooling, but only about 5 percent of them had finished college. Murguía and Telles's analyses also revealed that skin color still influenced educational outcomes even when parents' education was taken into account. This means that skin color had an independent effect on the likelihood that Mexican Americans would attain high levels of education.

Margaret Hunter (2005), using data from the 1979 National Chicano Study as well as the 1980 National Study of Black Americans, also found that skin color predicted educational outcomes for Mexican American and African American women. Those with lighter skin generally had higher educational levels, even controlling for their own class backgrounds.

You might wonder if things have changed since 1979 and 1980, the years from which the data used in these studies were drawn. The findings of more recent studies are, not surprisingly, similar. A study, based in Boston, found that Latinas with light skin were more likely to be married than dark-skinned Latinas (Gómez 2008), while more recently, Karletta White (2015) found evidence that Latinos and blacks with darker skin are more likely than their lighter-skinned counterparts to be stopped and arrested by police officers. In addition, Alexis Rosenblum and colleagues (2015) found that Latin American immigrants with darker skin tones earn less than their lighter-skinned counterparts, even when taking into account other relevant factors such as age, education, and labor market experience. Using a wide variety of measures, researchers have consistently found that Latinos with darker skin tones face more discrimination than their lighter-skinned counterparts.

Africa and the African Diaspora

Jemima Pierre (2008) describes a scene in downtown Accra, Ghana, where large billboards that feature a very light-skinned African woman to advertise *Gel Eclaircissant*—a bleaching treatment—are plastered across the town. Pierre asks how Ghana, “a proud black postcolonial African nation with an

established history of Pan-Africanism,” can have such blatant antiblack advertisements. To answer this question, Pierre argues that skin-bleaching practices are a reflection of the ways that processes of racialization are alive and well in postcolonial Ghana. Thus, even though Ghana is a proud, black nation, it is not immune to global white supremacy. It is through global white supremacy that Ghana and other African nations are connected to the African diaspora, where a preference for light skin is prevalent. Additionally, many African countries are marked by a hierarchy in which lighter-skinned, mixed-race people occupy more positions of power and have more economic resources than darker-skinned people (Lewis, Robkin, Gaska, and Njoki 2011).

Skin bleaching has become common throughout Africa (see Figure 6.1). Studies have revealed that as many as 25 percent of women in Mali; 30 percent of women in Tanzania; 52 percent of women in Dakar, Senegal; 66 percent of people in Brazzaville, Congo; 75 percent of people in Lagos, Nigeria; and 60 percent of women in Zambia use skin-bleaching products (Kpanake, Munoz Sastre, and Mullet 2009; Lewis et al. 2011).

Why? In Tanzania, a team of scholars (Lewis et al. 2011) interviewed forty-two women to ask them why they used skin-bleaching products, even though these products are known to cause severe skin damage, skin cancer, and brain disease. Tanzanian women gave six primary reasons for why they bleached their skin: (1) to remove acne, (2) to have soft skin, (3) to be more white, (4) to remove dark patches, (5) to attract men, and (6) to impress peers. Women gave a variety of reasons for why they used these creams, but the desire to look better was at the center of all of them. For many, the desire to look

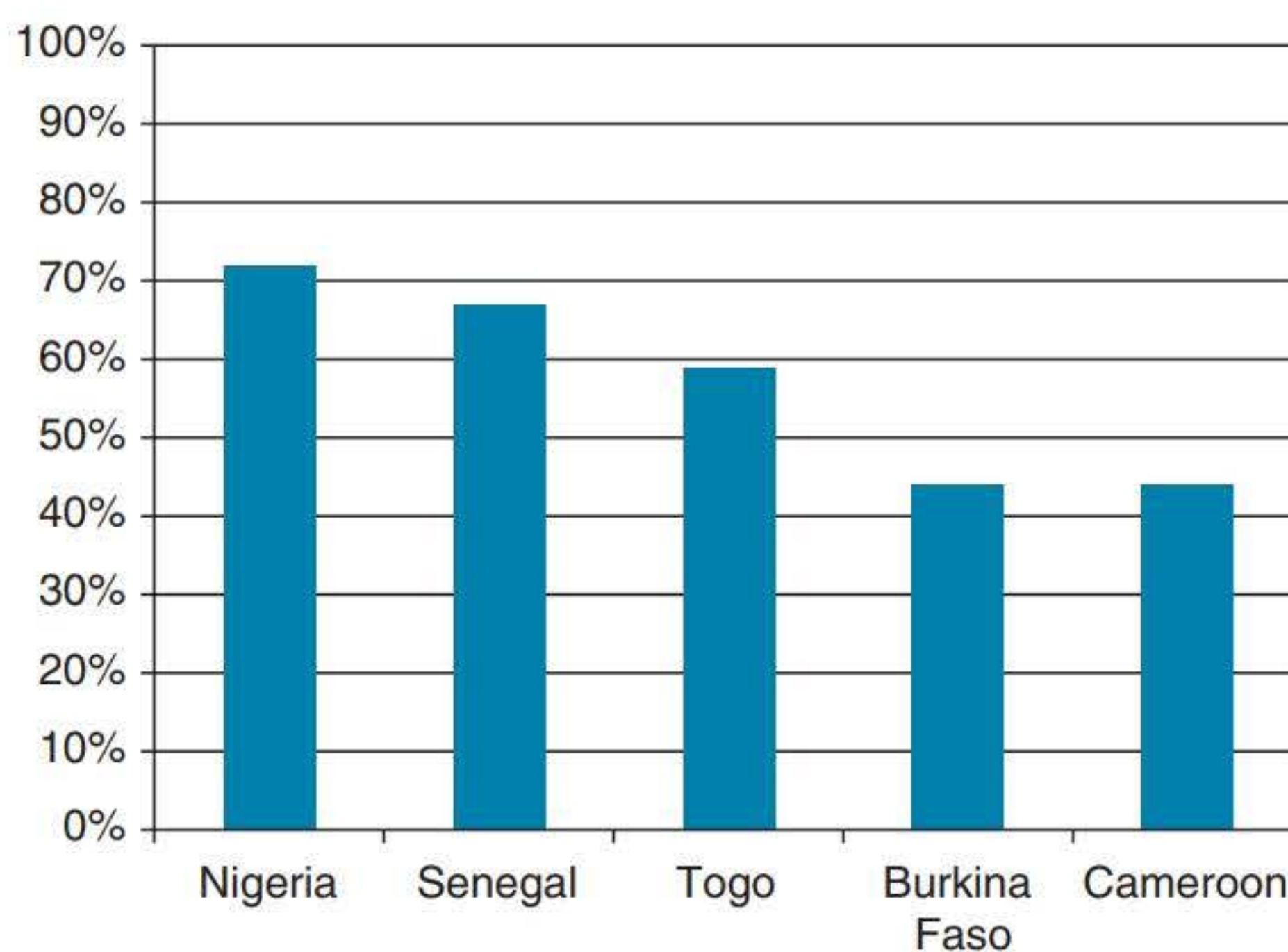


FIGURE 6-1.
Percentage of women in
African countries who use
skin-bleaching products

Source: Davids et al. (2016).



▲ A billboard advertising a skin lightening product called “Kness Petch” in Dakar, Senegal.

better was connected to looking whiter. One woman said she started bleaching “to be beautiful and to look like Arabians or Europeans and attractive to people especially men” (33). In a similar study in Togo, Lonzozou Kpanake, María Teresa Muñoz Sastre, and Etienne Mullet (2009) interviewed 300 men and women who reported using skin-bleaching creams and found that they gave a variety of reasons for doing so, including wanting to be considered important, civilized, and attractive, and to have lighter and softer skin. The prevalence of skin bleaching in a variety of African countries demonstrates that Africans continue to privilege light skin.

In a study of skin bleaching in Jamaica, Christopher A. D. Charles (2009) interviewed thirty-six women and twenty-two men who bleached their skin. He found that most of them bleached their skin either to remove facial blemishes, to lighten their skin, or to look more beautiful. Although more than 90 percent of Jamaicans are black, light skin is viewed as socially desirable among both men and women. For this reason, people who bleached their skin often thought that having lighter skin would make them more attractive. In the United States, skin bleaching was common among African Americans in Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s. Since then, we have seen the rise of the “black is beautiful” movement and an embrace of blackness among African Americans. There is some evidence that these social movements have alleviated colorism among black Americans. However, colorism has not completely dissipated.

A study by Jeffri Anne Wilder (2010) reveals the extent to which colorism continues to be embedded in the African American community. Wilder conducted focus groups with fifty-eight African American women in which she probed them about skin-color labels and their meanings. Wilder found that a wide variety of labels are used to describe light-skinned blacks, quite a few are used to describe darker-skinned blacks, and just four are used to describe those of medium skin tone. The wide variety of labels used indicates the importance of skin tone in the African American community. Whereas the terms used to describe medium skin—brown, milk chocolate, caramel, and pecan tan—were neutral, those used to describe light and dark skin were not. Terms for light skin included “house nigga” and “pretty skin,” while those for dark skin included “jigaboo” and “tar baby.” The association of lightness with “pretty skin” indicates that many African Americans view light skin to be more beautiful than dark skin. At the same time, use of the term “house nigga” is a reference to slavery and to the implication that those with light skin may be less authentically black. Wilder found in her focus groups that many African Americans view lighter-skinned women as more beautiful, intelligent, and refined than their darker-skinned counterparts.

research focus

Skin Tone and School Suspension

A study by Lance Hannon, Robert DeFina, and Sarah Bruch (2013) examined whether children's skin tone affects their likelihood of suspension from school. Previous research had found that black children are more likely to be suspended than white children.

Hannon, DeFina, and Bruch considered this effect in terms of variation within the black community, both by skin tone and gender. Suspension is important not only because it is a punishment inflicted on schoolchildren but also because suspensions can have long-term, cumulative effects. For example, children who have been suspended from school are more likely to end up in prison than those who have never been suspended. In addition, African Americans with darker skin tone face harsher punishments in the criminal justice system.

Hannon et al.'s study sought to discover whether similar discrimination happens with school-based discipline. The study was conducted among two separate national samples of African Americans. To measure skin tone, the authors used a scale designed by Douglas Massey and Jennifer A. Martin called The National Immigrant Survey Skin Color Scale.

The study found that having a darker skin tone increased the likelihood of school suspension: each darker gradation resulted in a slightly higher chance of being suspended. This effect was most pronounced for African American girls. Overall, 38 percent of the black girls in the study reported that they had been suspended at least once, compared with 53 percent of the black boys. However, these results varied further by skin color. Black male students with the lightest skin had about a 48 percent chance of having been suspended, compared with a 69 percent chance for those with the darkest skin. For girls, the range was from 28 percent (lightest skin) to 58 percent (darkest skin). Thus, whereas for light-skinned African American girls and boys there is a large difference in the likelihood of ever having been suspended (28 percent for girls versus 48 percent for boys), the difference is smaller between dark-skinned African American girls and boys (58 percent for girls versus 69 percent for boys).



The scale of skin-color darkness used by the research team.

(continued)

The authors conclude that skin tone affects suspension rates for both black girls and black boys but that there is more variation in suspension rates for black girls. They argue that this finding reveals how various forms of oppression intersect. The negative consequences of having dark skin are not exactly the same for black boys and girls. Instead, due to dominant beliefs about femininity and beauty, darker-skinned black girls face additional layers of discrimination not faced by lighter-skinned black girls.

For Discussion

1. What are some disadvantages dark-skinned African American girls might face at school that lighter-skinned African American girls may be less likely to face?
2. What do you think of the skin-tone scale? Do you think it captures meaningful variations?

Source: Hannon, DeFina, and Bruch 2013.

There is evidence that these preferences for light skin are connected to real, material rewards for being light. In the United States, historically, lighter-skinned African Americans have had more resources than darker-skinned African Americans and have tended to pass those resources down to their children. Ongoing discrimination exacerbates these inequalities. Colorism is a prominent aspect of inequality for African Americans in the criminal justice system: studies have shown that darker-skinned blacks get longer prison sentences than blacks with lighter skin and that darker-skinned blacks are more likely to receive the death penalty (Hochschild and Weaver 2007). The preference for light skin also plays out in hiring decisions: one experimental study showed that white employers were more likely to hire a lighter-skinned African American over a darker-skinned African American (Hochschild and Weaver 2007). Relatedly, Ellis Monk (2014) found that skin tone affects outcomes related to black Americans' educational attainment, household income, occupational status, and even the skin tone and educational attainment of their spouses. Notably, lighter-skinned black Americans have, on average, one full year more of education than darker-skinned black Americans. In addition, black Americans with "very dark skin" have 73 percent higher odds of having a less prestigious occupation than their lighter-skinned counterparts (Monk 2014).

Colorism and Creole Identity

Creole identity is a complicated thing in Louisiana, says Kristina Robinson, 29, of New Orleans.

It's an ethnicity, a cultural designation for people descended from colonial settlers in Louisiana, mainly of French and Latin lineage.

The term Creole was claimed by the French and Spanish settlers in colonial times but it also referred to

Africans and people who were a mixture of races. Those mixed-race descendants became a unique racial group and sometimes even included Native American heritage.

But in popular representation, Robinson says Creole has come to be defined as skin color.

She doesn't want to deny the rich Creole history but she doesn't identify as such if it means moving away from her blackness.

Black people think that her embrace of Creole means a rejection of being black.

"I never wanted to distance myself from my black ancestors," says the creative writing graduate student at Dillard University.

"They are the ones who claim me."

In her light skin, Robinson understands the insidious ways of colorism, a system in which light skin is valued more than dark skin.

"Colorism is a major problem within the Creole community and the black community," she says. "It's under discussed. It's perplexing and vexing how to work out this idea. I can see how the one drop rule is why we have so much colorism in our society."

"One drop is a lie," she says. "Black plus white doesn't equal black or it doesn't equal white. It equals black plus white."

She calls herself black. But other people think she is from India or the Middle East, especially in her academic work environment, where she does not have black colleagues.

"The assumption is I am not black," she says.

Ultimately, she believes environment plays a big role in identity.



Kristina Robinson calls herself black over Creole.

Voices

(continued)



Continued

Few people, she says, think that of her sister. One reason may be that her sister has more of a button nose. But another reason is that she works in a field with more black people, whereas Robinson finds herself in academic settings where she is the sole black woman.

Robinson acknowledges her lighter skin gives her privilege in a color-conscious society.

“But in those situations where you have to identify yourself and you choose to identify yourself as white—there’s a big denial going on there.”

“I do think it’s troublesome when someone who is of mixed race chooses to deny that part of them that was oppressed,” she says.

Source: Basu 2009. Courtesy CNN.

SKIN COLOR, GENDER, AND BEAUTY

How does skin color relate to gender and beauty? Colorism is evident in the U.S. entertainment industry, especially for women of color. Many of the most prominent Latina stars—Salma Hayek, Jennifer Lopez, and Eva Longoria—are very light-skinned. The same could be said about newer Latina stars such as Selena Gomez and Gina Rodriguez. Light-skinned artists of color are more likely to rise to fame because light skin is associated with beauty both in the United States and around the globe. Margaret Hunter (2005) explains that beauty, like colorism, is an ideology that can be used as a tool to maintain **patriarchy**, or male dominance in a society. Beauty divides women through competition and diverts their attention to their physical appearance and away from other oppressive forces in their lives.

In the United States, light skin, long hair, light eyes, and straight noses are all associated with beauty—and with whiteness. When a woman is called “fair,” this label refers both to light skin and to physical attractiveness. Thus, African American women with long, straight hair and light skin are often perceived to be more attractive than their darker-skinned counterparts. Of course, there is individual preference and variation. Yet studies have consistently shown that dark-skinned women are devalued both by their co-ethnics and by whites (Hunter 2005).

Hunter (2005, 70–71) introduces the concept of a **beauty queue** to explain “how sexism and racism interact to create a queue of women from the lightest to the darkest, where the lightest get the most resources and the darkest get the least. The lightest women get access to more resources because not only are they lighter-skinned and therefore racially privileged, but their light skin is interpreted in our culture as more beautiful and therefore they are also privileged as beautiful women.” For women, beauty is an asset that can lead

patriarchy Male dominance in a society.

beauty queue A concept explaining how sexism and racism interact to create a queue of women ranging from the lightest to the darkest, in which the lightest get the most resources.

to better jobs, better pay, and more status. Because lighter women are seen as more beautiful, they can be considered to have **skin-color privilege**, even if they belong to a disadvantaged racial group.

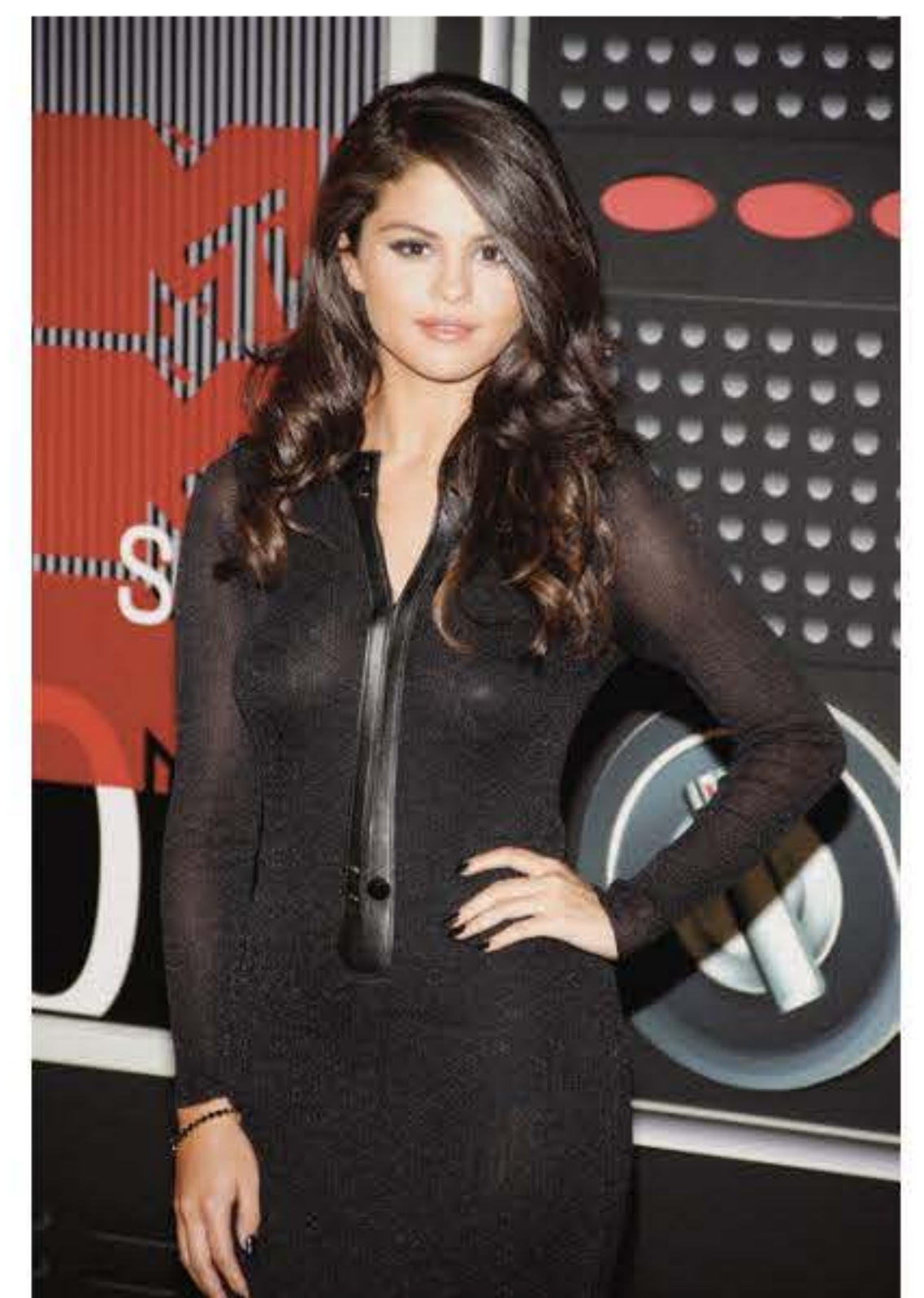
Siobhan Brooks (2010) uses the concept of **erotic capital** to explain how skin color relates to beauty for women of color. Doing research with strip club workers, Brooks found that white women often earned more than black and Latina women, but that light-skinned black and Latina women were able to use their erotic capital—their attractiveness and sensuality—to earn more than darker-skinned black women. Whereas lighter-skinned black and Latina women were seen as exotic, dark-skinned black women were perceived as hypersexual and thus devalued. Similar to Hunter (2007), Brooks found evidence of a beauty queue, in which white women earned the most, followed by lighter-skinned blacks and Latinas, and then darker-skinned women. In the case of strip clubs, being whiter or lighter had material advantages.

Although there are clear advantages to being light-skinned, there is also evidence that women of color do not necessarily want to be white, even if they prefer lighter skin. Dionne Stephens and Paula Fernández (2011) interviewed thirty-four Hispanic women to shed light on their perspective on the relationship between skin color and attractiveness. The researchers found that “having ‘some color’ was viewed as an important symbol of [the women’s] ‘authentic’ Hispanic identity” (85). The women they interviewed specifically stated that they did not desire white skin, but that they preferred to be tan and viewed being tan as being attractive and sexy. Notably, the women also did not want to be “black” or too dark.

This research is also relevant for Asian Americans. Rondilla and Spickard (2007) interviewed ninety-nine Asian Americans about their skin-color preferences. They found that respondents widely agreed that lighter skin was better in that it was associated with beauty, intelligence, and high class. Women and men recalled being told by their parents not to marry too dark so they could have light-skinned children. As part of the interview process, the researchers showed interviewees a picture of three conventionally beautiful Asian American women and asked them to make up a story about each woman. One woman had light skin, hair, and eyes; another was medium-toned and had black hair; and the third was dark-skinned. The stories about the medium-toned women were the most positive: she was seen as smart, wealthy, and stylish. In contrast, the dark-skinned woman was seen as likely an immigrant, poor, and hardworking. The stories about the lightest woman were not positive either: interviewees saw her as confused about her identity, lazy, a partygoer, and unhappy. These findings reveal that Asian Americans have an abstract desire

skin-color privilege The privilege of being considered more beautiful as a result of having lighter skin.

erotic capital A concept linking the attractiveness and sensuality of a woman to her skin color.



▲ Many Latina stars, such as Selena Gomez, are very light skinned—a trait often associated with beauty around the globe.

for whiteness but do not desire features that make them look too white. In her later work, Joanne Rondilla (2009) argues that Asian women do not use skin lighteners in an attempt to become white; instead, they use them out of a wish to become a better version of themselves.

This research has parallels with work conducted in other parts of the world. Aisha Khan (2009) argues that although there is a color hierarchy in Indo-Trinidadian society, the ultimate desire is to become light, but not white, as whiteness signifies cultural loss. Lynn Thomas (2009) points out that in South Africa, women use skin lighteners not to become white, but to attain a lighter shade of black. Christina Sue (2009) contends that people in Veracruz, Mexico, use *mestizaje* as a whitening strategy to become lighter mestizos, not to become white. Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2009) argues that Filipinas associate light skin with modernity and social mobility, not necessarily with whiteness. And Ayu Saraswati (2012) finds that Indonesian women use skin whiteners to become lighter, but not to become Caucasian or to attain the light skin of Chinese women. Instead, they prefer Indonesian whiteness.

In a study of beauty pageants in Nigeria, Oluwakemi M. Balogun (2012) examined two beauty pageants: the Queen Nigeria pageant, which focuses primarily on Nigeria, and the Most Beautiful Girl in Nigeria pageant, which is geared to a more international audience and is connected to the Miss Universe and Miss World pageants. Balogun found that beauty pageant directors did not ignore skin color, nor did they give universal preference to light skin. Instead, they chose dark-skinned women when their goal was to find an authentic African woman to represent their country to the world and lighter-skinned women when they were searching for a woman with global mass appeal as a beautiful woman.

Most of these works on skin color focus on women, as colorism is a gendered dynamic. Skin-color valuations more heavily affect women's lives than men's. Jyostna Vaid (2009) highlights the increasing salience of skin color, as well as the gendered nature of judgments based on skin color, for Indians in India and the diaspora. Vaid found that Indian women are twice as likely as men to mention skin color in marriage ads, signaling that skin color is more important in marriage negotiations for women than for men. Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2009) conceptualizes light skin as a form of symbolic capital and makes the case that this form of capital is more important for women than for men. Ayu Saraswati (2012) interviewed forty-six Indonesian women about their use of skin-whitening creams and found that many of the women had experienced discrimination and denigration because of their dark skin color. Many had received comments on their skin color when they were girls and

used skin-whitening creams to hide what they viewed to be a deficiency—their dark skin. Whereas dark skin can be seen as masculine, and thus appropriate, for men, Saraswati found that women in Indonesia overwhelmingly preferred light skin. Moreover, women around the world feel more pressure than men to be beautiful (Hunter 2005).

Nevertheless, men also can experience benefits from being light-skinned and having European features. *Grey's Anatomy* star Jesse Williams, for example, explained: “To some people I might be a celebrity because I’m physically attractive. We are programmed to believe that someone is attractive because they told you that blue eyes are hot. I am not going to participate in that shit,” he says. “I aim to do what I can with what I have. And I have my [looks]—you know, European beauty standards give me access to things.” Williams acknowledges that his blue eyes and light skin grant him unearned privileges, yet he disparages the system that gives him these advantages (Kasperkevic 2015).

In India, it continues to be common for people to use advertisements to find spouses, and these advertisements make it clear that fair skin makes women more marriageable. Radhika Parameswaran and Kavitha Cardoza (2009) report that men are much less likely than women to report their own skin color in these advertisements and that men are much more likely to indicate a preference for light skin in a partner. These researchers consistently found ads written by men that sought a “fair” bride and even reported one advertisement by a father who lamented the fact that his daughter’s skin was not fair. These preferences have generated a market for skin-lightening creams in India. In 2013, fairness products constituted 45 percent of the cosmetics and toiletries market in India (McDougall 2013). Companies that make these products also use advertising to reinforce the idea that lighter women are more marriageable. One ad for Fair & Lovely Fairness Cold Cream shows a young woman with a beaming smile. The caption reads: “This winter, I discovered the only cold cream that also made me fairer. (And *he* discovered me)” (Parameswaran and Cardoza 2009). A consistent theme in Indian advertisements for whitening creams is that women who wish to be more beautiful can use these creams to become more fair and thus more desirable, to men.

Transnational corporations have taken advantage of the widespread desire for fair skin around the world and have used it to generate immense profits. Through advertising, large transnational corporations have not only reinforced the idea that light skin is essential for success, but also have profited immensely from selling products that promise to save women from the pain and rejection associated with dark skin. Lynn Thomas (2009) underscores the importance of transnational entanglements for the global preference for



▲ *Grey's Anatomy* star Jesse Williams acknowledges that his blue eyes and light skin grant him privileges.

lighter skin, as most companies that sell whitening products are transnational. In Indonesia, for example, transnational corporations such as Unilever, L'Oréal, and Shiseido are the main sellers of skin whiteners. And out of all the products in the cosmetics industry, it is skin-whitening products that are the most profitable in Indonesia, which is the fourth most populous country in the world (Saraswati 2012).

voices

After #NotFairandLovely: Changing Thought Patterns Instead of Skintone

The MuslimARC-launched hashtag #NotFairandLovely recently trended in London. The tweets were heart-breaking. Women shared how they were limited from going outside to play in the sun as children, their struggles to overcome an internalized hatred of a dark skin tone, and subsequent acts of self-shaming and devaluation. Some questioned whether their husband's compliments were genuine and expressed concern over the future lives of their children who may inherit their skin tone. People related stories of children judged from the day they are born by the color of their skin: a light-skinned baby is a joy . . . and a dark-skinned baby? . . .

...

I ask that we begin un-training ourselves from using the word "fair" to mean light. No skin tone should ever be considered unfair, nor should we settle for a world in which possession of a certain skin tone brings with it an assessment of strength of character. A "fair" world is a just world.

Second, let us remind ourselves and those around us that our words and our thoughts and our actions matter.

For example, if someone lists skin tone as [a] factor in considering whether a person is a good candidate for marriage, ask why the person's skin color is relevant to the discussion. Listen. Follow up. If you cannot end the conversation with a verbal request (i.e., to refrain from making comments valuing one skin tone over



Namira Islam, executive director of the Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MuslimARC), argues that by modifying our use of language, we can reshape our thinking on skin color and beauty.



another or using skin tone to determine the worth of a person in front of you), do so in your heart. Letting people politely know that you dislike what is being said and that you are uncomfortable with it is an important starting point.

Stop adding value judgments to words in your own vocabulary. Don't use "fair" to refer to light-skinned in your thoughts, your writing, or your speech. Realize that this usage does not reflect an objective truth—this is a construction we maintain. "Fair" does not have to refer to any one particular skin tone. The human body is a miracle, skin is fascinating, and an individual is beautiful, period. Statements like "beautiful for a . . ." should be corrected when uttered by others and eliminated from our thinking and speech. Repeat as necessary.

Lastly, realize that this entire discussion is grounded in the use of appearance as a metric of quality. Reject the notion that outward beauty dictates self-worth. Reject the idea that someone's physical beauty is the outward manifestation of their inward value. Reject the idea that your face, your skin, your hair, and your bone construction bear any connection with your strength of spirit, depth of heart, or beauty of imagination. . . .

We must retrain our brains to understand that skin tone does not dictate physical beauty, and that physical beauty does not guarantee happiness. Our words should reflect these concepts. Begin within yourself. True happiness comes from valuing the self and valuing others so that we treat ourselves well in order to better the lives of those around us.

Source: Islam 2014.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

As we have seen in this chapter, skin-color valuations have been pervasive throughout history and around the world. The preference for whiteness or lightness can be found in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the United States. There are local variations on these preferences, yet they also have many aspects in common and are closely related to gender and sexuality. Colorism, it turns out, is a manifestation of racism that further splits fractured groups into an internal hierarchy related to color. At the same time, since race is closely tied to identity, there are costs to being perceived as too light or, especially, too white. Examining colorism around the world allows us to perceive both commonalities and differences in terms of racial stratification.

This examination also sheds light on the gendered nature of colorism: the color hierarchy has different meanings for men and women. Although some men use skin-whitening creams or pills, women are much more likely to use these products, which can be dangerous and even fatal. Darker-skinned men may find it more difficult than lighter-skinned men to find romantic partners, but this effect is more pronounced among women. And although physical attractiveness serves as capital for both men and women, patriarchy has created a situation in which women must depend more than men on their physical appearance. To the extent that light skin is viewed as more desirable around the world, this aspect of the human body more heavily influences women's lives than men's.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

colorism 159	<i>mestizo</i> 163	beauty queue 176
skin-color stratification 160	<i>pardo</i> 164	skin-color privilege 177
pigmentocracy 160	global color hierarchy 166	erotic capital 177
mulatto 162	diaspora 166	
hypodescent 162	patriarchy 176	

6.1 When and how did colorism and skin-color stratification originate? (pp. 160–165)

- Colorism has a long history and many distinct manifestations around the world.

Review

- » What is the difference between colorism and skin-color stratification?
- » How long has colorism been a factor in the African American community?
- » How is skin-color stratification in Brazil related to colonialism?
- » What is the history of colorism in Asia and Africa?

Critical Thinking

- » Why might it be important to understand whether colorism predates colonialism?

6.2 How does colorism differ across societies? (pp. 165–176)

- Skin-whitening creams, which are evidence of a global color hierarchy, can be found from the United States to Asia to Latin America to Africa.

Review

- » What are some indicators of colorism and skin-color stratification in the United States, Asia, Latin America, and Africa?

Critical Thinking

- » What are some distinctions between a desire to be white and a desire to have light skin?

6.3 How does skin color relate to gender and beauty? (pp. 176–181)

- Skin-color stratification and colorism are more prominent for women than men, and this disparity is largely related to beauty norms.

Review

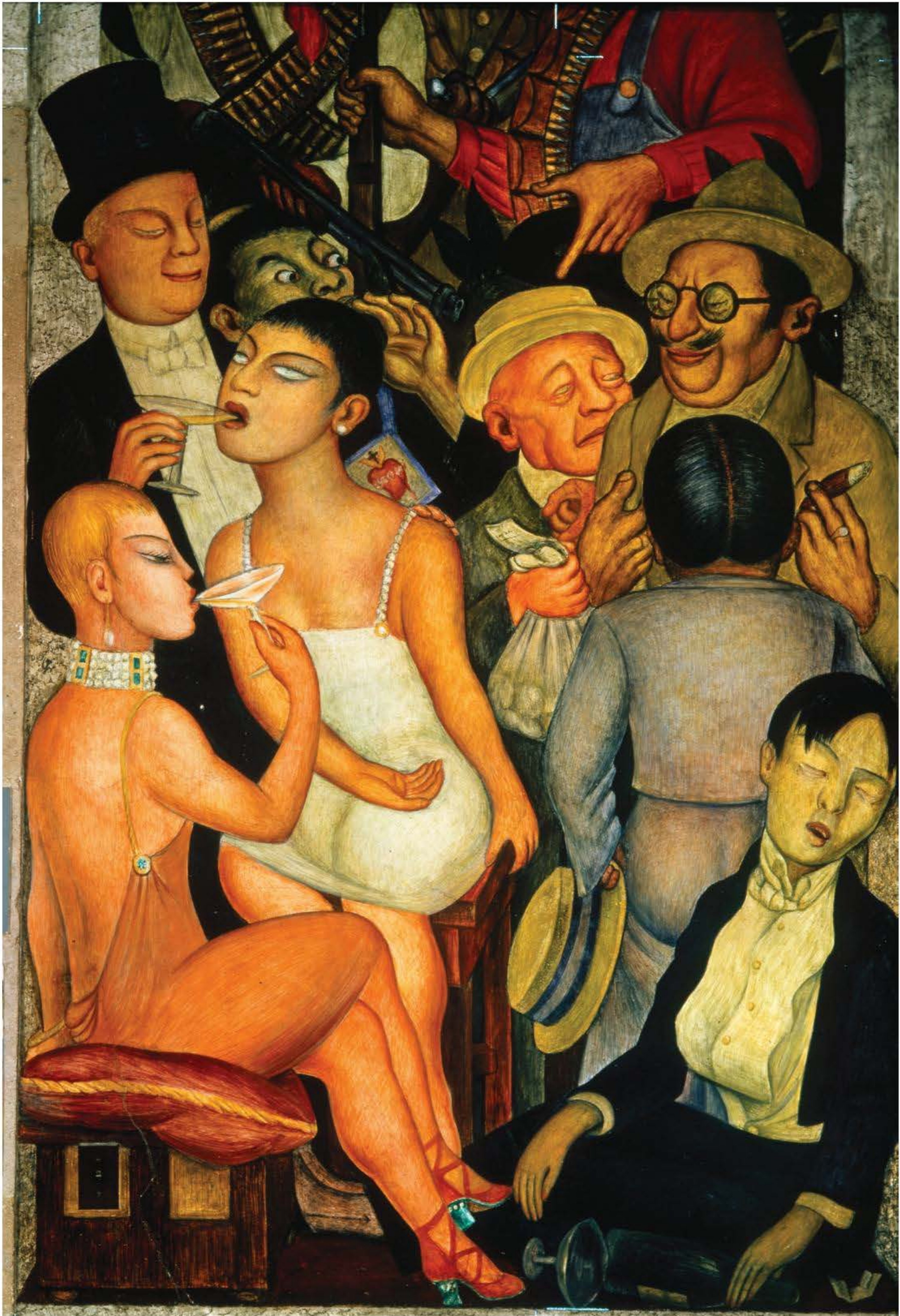
- » What is a “beauty queue”?
- » How does skin-color privilege vary by racial group?

Critical Thinking

- » In what ways is colorism “gendered”?

Talking about Race

How would you respond if a friend or relative implied that you are a better (or worse) person because of your skin color or hair texture? You might first ask for an explanation of what this comment means. Listen to any justification offered, and then use the knowledge you have gained in this chapter to respond accordingly. For example, you can tell them that remarks that devalue dark skin can be harmful, or you can explain the connections between colorism and racism.



Orgy-Night of the Rich (detail). Diego Rivera. 1926. Mural. (Schalkwijk/Art Resource, NY)

White Privilege and the Changing U.S. Racial Hierarchy

As You Read

- 7.1 What is white privilege, and how does it work?
- 7.2 Does white privilege benefit all whites equally?
- 7.3 Who is white in twenty-first-century America?
- 7.4 How have racial and ethnic classifications changed over time?
- 7.5 Are Latinos a racial or an ethnic group?

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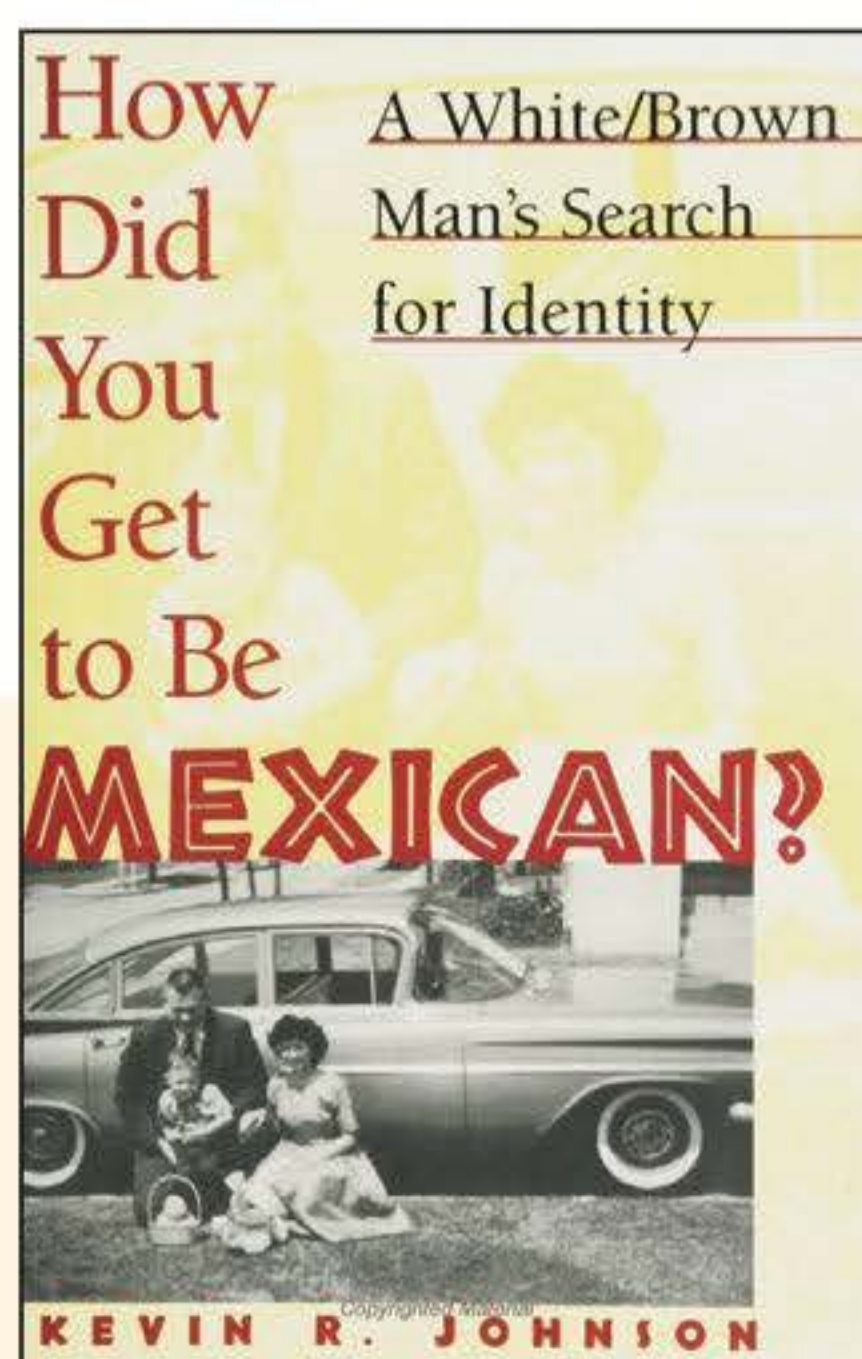
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Kevin Johnson, born to a Mexican American mother and an Anglo father, reflects on what it means to be a Mexican American with an Anglo surname. His reflections point to the salience of racial lines, racial identities, and racial discourses in the United States.

My mother is Mexican American and my father is Anglo. They met and married young in Los Angeles, where I was born in 1958. Their story is unremarkable. Intermarriage between Anglos and Mexican Americans has occurred for centuries in the Southwest. For much of childhood and youth, I paid little attention to my mixed heritage.

Though I did not think much about it at the time, I have classified myself as Mexican American since adolescence. My eyes are brown and my hair dark brown, almost black. I am more comfortable in Mexican American than in Anglo culture. Over the years, the contrast between my name and self-identification has often been a source of curiosity to others and of occasional discomfort to me. The burning question always seems to be, “Am I a Latino?” This seemingly simple, straightforward question raises complex issues that go to the core of race relations in the modern United States. This book offers a glimpse into my life in the borderlands between Anglo and Mexican worlds.

My mother-in-law, Mary Helen Salazar, a Mexican American from Los Angeles, was visiting our new house in Davis. We were sitting in the family room watching the television news. The program cut to a story about racism in the South. Listening intently, Mary Helen observed, “I would never survive there.” I responded without thinking, “The real division there is between blacks and whites,” to which she quickly replied, “Well, *you* don’t have a Spanish surname.”

In the spring of 1996, I was sitting in a bar off Pacific Coast Highway in Manhattan Beach, California, a white, upper-middle-class suburb of Los Angeles. Funeral services for my father’s uncle, my great-uncle Kennard Johnson (known as “Brown-eyes” or “Brownie” to distinguish him from his blue-eyed twin), had just ended. I had time to kill with my father and step-brother while I waited for my return flight to Sacramento, and we were exchanging memories of Brown-eyes over a few beers. What a funny guy, I mused. “Remember on the way to Yosemite that year when he pulled up his car next to ours and, for a laugh, pulled out his fake teeth?” But he sure was a worrier, which was no

wonder given a lifetime of economic insecurity. He always worked hard at the bakery, where he was employed for as long as I can remember, but money must have been tight. I wondered what it had been like when he married Rosie and became one of the first in his family to marry a Mexican American woman. They had grown up together in a working-class neighborhood near downtown Los Angeles where Mexican Americans and Anglos lived side by side, and had spent fifty years there before moving to the desert to retire.

While I sat there thinking about Brown-eyes, a tall fellow sitting on the barstool next to us was rambling on to anyone who would listen about a recent trip to Texas, interspersing his banter with a series of bad jokes. In retrospect, what happened next seemed inevitable. I turned in just in time to hear him ask, “How do you make sure nobody steals the stereo speakers in your car? You put a sign on them saying ‘*no habla español.*’” Nobody laughed. I wondered why I had to listen to this crap. Why couldn’t I drink my beer and grieve without dealing with jokes that cut painfully to the core of my identity? Like a boxer in the late rounds of a fight or a weary runner near the end of a marathon, I was too tired from the travails of the long day—seeing mourning family, reliving the sad and happy memories, pondering my own mortality—to lash back at this insensitive Texan wannabe. “Please give me another,” I asked the barmaid and emptied my glass.

The guy got me thinking. On the flight back to Sacramento, I thought of the Spanish speakers I knew and found that I could not think of one who might steal a car stereo. I wondered what it would be like for my identity to be “transparent,” a non-issue in my daily life, the way it is for many Anglos.

These stories show how a few words may hurt and marginalize. They also demonstrate the limits of assimilation for Latinos, even half-white ones like myself.

Source: Johnson 1999.

Racial identities are important in the United States because race is personally and materially important in our lives. In the excerpt above, Kevin Johnson wonders aloud what it might be like to be unambiguously white and thus to not have to think about race all the time. Not having to think about race is one example of white privilege, the other side of racial oppression. Whereas people of color face disadvantages because of racism, whites experience privilege.

White people in the United States do not all share in this privilege equally—wealthy whites benefit from whiteness in ways that working-class whites do

not, for example. However, it can be useful to look critically at whiteness in the same ways that we examine blackness, Asian-ness, indigeneity, or *latinidad*. Because whiteness is the unmarked norm in U.S. society, it can be easy to overlook it and talk about race without talking about what it means to be white. In this chapter, we will explore whiteness by considering who is white, the privileges of whiteness, the boundaries of whiteness, and the past and future of racial categories in the United States.

Although there are undeniable privileges associated with being white, as we saw in the last chapter, people are attached to their nonwhite identities, and it is not the case that all nonwhites would like to be white. Why wouldn't (or couldn't) everyone gain access to white privilege? What does whiteness signify in the United States today? Who is white and who is not? Where are the boundaries of whiteness? How and why has the significance of whiteness changed over time?

WHITE PRIVILEGE

white privilege The advantages inherent in being categorized as white.

wage of whiteness As defined by W. E. B. DuBois in 1936, psychological benefits that white workers received by aligning with the dominant group, their white bosses, as opposed to developing working-class solidarity with recently freed black slaves.

What is white privilege, and how does it work? **White privilege** refers to the advantages inherent in being categorized as white. The concept derives from earlier work by African American sociologist W. E. B. DuBois (1868–1963), who observed that white workers in the United States over time came to see themselves as white like their bosses, as opposed to developing working-class solidarity with recently freed black slaves. DuBois argued in 1936 that white workers received a psychological “**wage of whiteness**” by aligning with the dominant group; they were poor, but at least they were white. Additionally, by reserving certain segments of the labor market for whites only, white laborers were able to reap material rewards from their whiteness. Other scholars, mostly historians, have built on DuBois's insights to explain how waves of European immigrants learned to be white and to reap the privileges of whiteness (Allen 1994; Jacobson 1998; Roediger 1999).

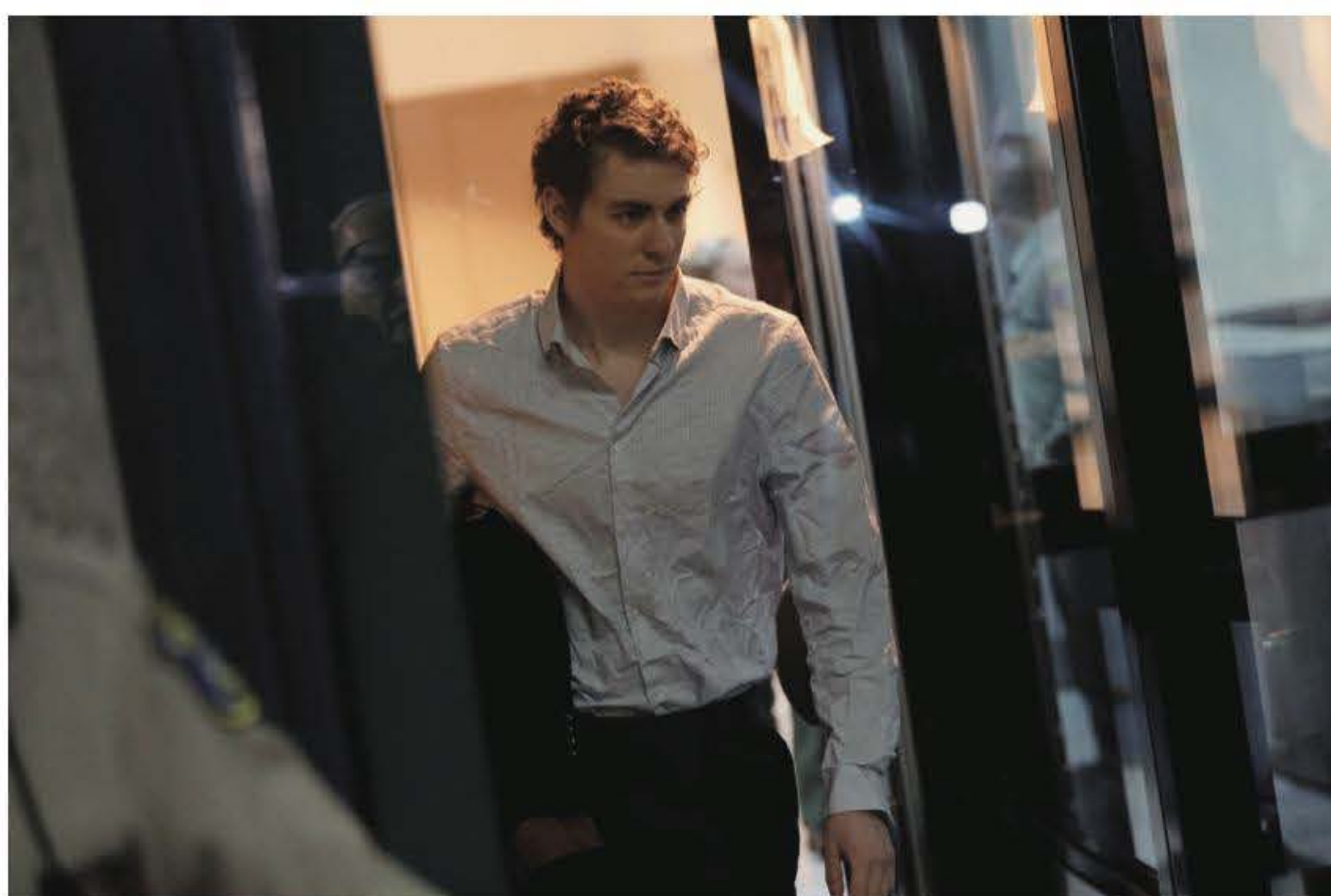
As noted in Chapter Two, European immigrants who arrived in the United States in the early twentieth century did not think of themselves as white prior to their arrival. And, in some cases, people in the United States did not see them as white. Irish immigrants learned to capitalize on their whiteness by forming unions and excluding blacks from them. And although Jews faced discrimination during and after World War II, as whites, they were able to reap the benefits of the GI bills and Federal Housing Administration and Department of Veterans Affairs mortgages that were denied to blacks, which propelled many whites into the middle class (Brodkin 2005). Whereas these

European immigrants had to learn to be white, most whites today never have to think about whiteness.

In the contemporary United States, whiteness is an unmarked identity. Whereas blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans are constantly reminded of their race, whites easily can forget that they too have a race (Dalton 2005). When we talk about race (or, more recently, diversity), the focus is usually on nonwhites, as if white were not also a race (Lewis 2004). When we think of race in the United States, whiteness usually is not the first thing that comes to mind. The reason is that whiteness has become normalized—"whiteness makes itself invisible precisely by asserting its normalcy" (Frankenberg 1997, 6).

Privilege is often hard to notice. If you are white, it can be difficult to notice that you are not being followed around the store; that people are smiling at you on the street instead of clutching their purses; that no one asks you if you speak English; that you are not asked for identification when paying with a credit card. Instead, you are likely to think that these things are normal—that this is simply how things are. To notice these privileges as a white person, you likely would have to walk down the street with an African American friend or accompany a Latino friend to get a driver's license. Then, you may notice a difference in terms of how white people respond to you and your non-white friend. Few whites notice they are treated better than nonwhites, and most are unlikely to attribute that better treatment to privilege. Privilege is largely invisible to those who have it.

White privilege only becomes visible when people point it out. For example, in 2015, a white Stanford student by the name of Brock Allen Turner was found sexually assaulting an unconscious, semi-naked white woman behind a dumpster. She was taken to the hospital, where a nurse noted that significant trauma had been inflicted on the victim's genitalia. When the case went to trial, the jury found Turner guilty on three felony counts, and the prosecution argued he should get a six-year sentence. However, Judge Aaron Persky was hesitant to punish Turner this severely and gave him six months in county jail instead. The judge explained: "A prison sentence would have a severe impact on him." *Huffington Post* writer Alanna Vagianos wrote in response: "Turner's lenient punishment is the perfect example of what happens when rape culture and white privilege collide." By *rape culture*, Vagianos is referring to the normalization of sexual abuse of women in our society. Because of Turner's whiteness and class privilege, the judge had sympathy for him. Turner was held in protective custody and ultimately spent only three months behind bars (Vagianos 2016).



▲ The case of Brock Turner showed how white privilege is enacted.

The case of Brock Turner, as well as many other cases of white privilege, makes it clear that white privilege doesn't simply exist—it is enacted. The judge gave Turner a light sentence because he did not believe Turner to be a dangerous man. When shopkeepers are not suspicious of white shoppers, the white shopper is the beneficiary of the privilege, but only because the shopkeeper has accepted the racist idea that whites are less likely to shoplift. White privilege, then, is related to white supremacy: white privilege exists because of past and current practices that reproduce racism.

Why would whites ever be inclined to end white privilege? Moral arguments can be made about the ethics of accepting unearned benefits, but it is especially hard for anyone to not be desirous of passing down benefits (meritorious or not) to their children. Everyone wants the best for their children, so there are limits to the utility of moral arguments.

research focus

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

Peggy McIntosh (2005) famously described white privilege as an “invisible knapsack.” She explains: “White privilege is like an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious” (109). McIntosh then explains what is included in the contents of this invisible knapsack. Here are some of the items:

- I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
- When I am told about our national heritage or “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
- Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
- I can swear, or dress in secondhand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.

- I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
- I can choose blemish cover or bandages in “flesh” color and have them more or less match my skin. (McIntosh 1989, 10–12)
- McIntosh explains that these privileges amount to “unearned advantages” that are consistently generated by her skin color.

For Discussion

1. Do all whites experience these forms of white privilege?
2. What other forms of white privilege can you think of?
3. How are other forms of privilege, such as male privilege or class privilege, related to white privilege?
4. Can non-whites have access to white privilege?
5. Is white privilege a useful concept for thinking about racial inequality in the United States? Why or why not?



Retailers often racially profile and treat white customers better than non-white customers.

Source: McIntosh 2005.

We can also ask, however, whether racism can be harmful to whites even though white privilege exists. In *Whiteness: The Power of Privilege*, the antiracist activist and writer Tim Wise contends that “the price we pay to stay one step ahead of others is enormous” (2005, 120). The vast majority of working people could earn higher wages and have better benefits if whites and nonwhites worked together to demand them as a common goal. Whites are less likely to go to prison than blacks or Latinos, yet the enormous amount of resources the United States invests in the prison-industrial complex are resources that don’t go into better schools, parks, libraries, and universities. For these reasons, W. E. B. DuBois and others have referred to the “psychological wage of whiteness”: racism makes all whites *think* they are getting a better deal, but the reality is that racism affects all of us, albeit in different ways. DuBois argued that the psychological wage of whiteness drives a wedge between white and black laborers, who otherwise share an interest in working together to fight for better material conditions.

It is important to think about white privilege for several reasons. First of all, if we want to understand racial oppression, it is crucial to understand how it looks from the other side. Second, white privilege often remains invisible, and by bringing it to light we can develop a better understanding of how racism works in our society.

WHITENESS, CLASS, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

An important point to keep in mind when thinking about white privilege is that although it certainly benefits some whites, all whites do not experience white privilege in the same way. When an employer gives a white applicant the benefit of the doubt because he is white, the applicant experiences white privilege, whether or not he is aware of it. However, a poor lesbian white woman in rural South Carolina, for example, will experience her whiteness—and her white privilege—in different ways than a wealthy white heterosexual male stockbroker in New York. The white stockbroker will have doors opened to him that will remain shut to a poor woman of any race.

White privilege can be hard to see. Similarly, class privilege also often remains invisible. In a study that compared middle-class white students with poor white students, Kirby Moss found that middle-class white students “overwhelmingly perceived class position as nearly nonexistent within White culture” (2003, 32). It was very difficult for these middle-class whites to see that they had advantages that working-class and poor whites did not. In contrast, the working-class and poor whites criticized the middle-class whites for being lazy and entitled and for not having to work for anything in life.

The privileges associated with being white were not the same for these two groups. The poor whites experienced a contradiction in their identities—whites were not supposed to be poor, yet they were. These poor whites found it difficult to envision taking advantage of their whiteness, as their poverty presented obstacles to enjoying the privileges of whiteness. Although they were white, they did not have the “set of cultural practices” (Frankenberg 1993, 43) associated with whiteness because of their class background. Moreover, many of these poor whites lived in poor, primarily nonwhite neighborhoods, where their whiteness presented obstacles to acceptance in their own neighborhoods.

Past and present-day practices of individual and institutional racism have created segregated neighborhoods in the United States. Whites’ privileged access to primarily white neighborhoods is part of white privilege. The other side of this coin is that working-class and poor whites cannot always afford to live in middle-class white neighborhoods and thus are unable to reap this particular benefit of whiteness. As Kirby Moss (2003) contends, poor whites

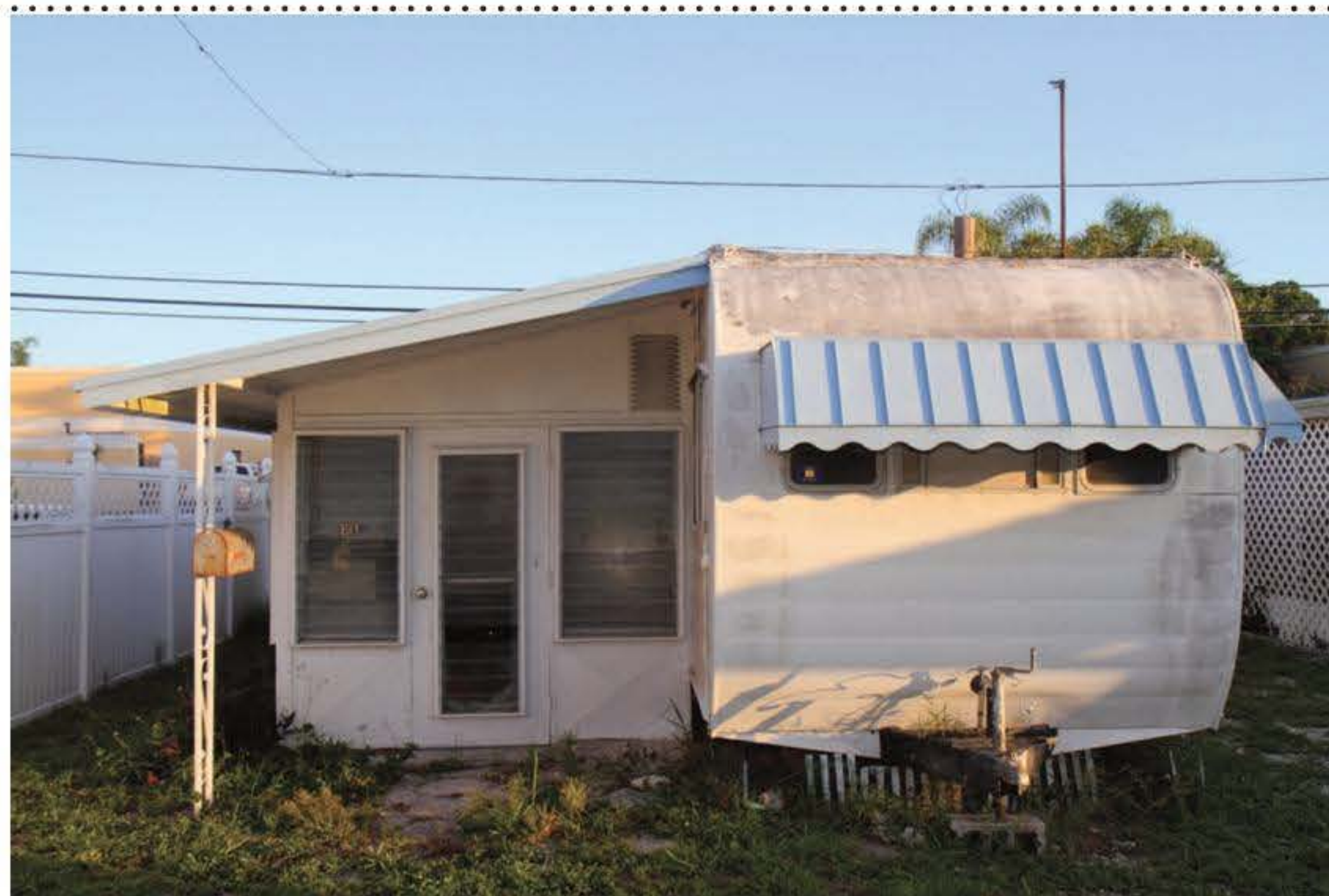
sometimes live in primarily nonwhite neighborhoods because that is where they can afford to live. Living in those neighborhoods, poor whites encounter many of the same challenges that their nonwhite neighbors encounter, such as crime, violence, and lack of access to resources.

This is one example that makes it evident that white privilege does not always work in the same way for working-class and poor whites as it does for wealthier whites. It is important to note here, however, that most poor whites live in primarily white neighborhoods, just as most poor blacks live in primarily black neighborhoods (Bischoff and Reardon 2014).

A white man who enters a primarily black neighborhood may be made aware of his whiteness once he finds himself surrounded by blacks and receiving stares (or even glares) from residents who want to know why a white person is in their neighborhood. In the narrow space of a primarily black neighborhood, a white person may not feel she is experiencing white privilege. However, a middle-class white man often can live his whole life without ever having to enter a space where his whiteness will present a challenge. He can avoid primarily black neighborhoods because there is no reason for him to ever go there. In contrast, a black man may need to go to a white neighborhood because that is where his job is located, or he even may be desirous of moving into such a neighborhood because that is where the good schools are. A black man may encounter problems with law enforcement or neighborhood watch associations if he walks around a middle-class white neighborhood.

Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person

I came from the kind of poor that people don't want to believe still exists in this country. Have you ever spent a frigid northern-Illinois winter without heat or running water? I have. At 12 years old were you making ramen noodles in a coffee maker with water you fetched from a public bathroom? I was. Have you ever lived



The concept of intersectionality recognizes that people can be privileged in some ways and not privileged in others.

Voices

(continued)

Continued

in a camper year-round and used a random relative's apartment as your mailing address? We did. Did you attend so many different elementary schools that you can only remember a quarter of their names? Welcome to my childhood.

So when a feminist told me I had “white privilege,” I told her that my white skin didn't do shit to prevent me from experiencing poverty. . . . It is absolutely a freak anomaly that I'm in graduate school, considering that not one person on either side of my family has a college degree. And it took me until my 30s to ever believe that someone from my stock could achieve such a thing. Poverty colors nearly everything about your perspective on opportunities for advancement in life. Middle-class, educated people assume that anyone can achieve their goals if they work hard enough. Folks steeped in poverty rarely see a life past working at the gas station, making the rent on their trailer, and self-medicating with cigarettes and prescription drugs until they die of a heart attack. (I've just described one whole side of my family and the life I assumed I'd be living before I lucked out of it.) I, maybe more than most people, can completely understand why broke white folks get pissed when the word “privilege” is thrown around. As a child I was constantly discriminated against because of my poverty, and those wounds still run very deep.

But luckily my college education introduced me to a more nuanced concept of privilege: the term “intersectionality.” The concept of intersectionality recognizes that people can be privileged in some ways and definitely not privileged in others. There are many different types of privilege, not just skin-color privilege, that impact the way people can move through the world or are discriminated against. These are all things you are born into, not things you earned, that afford you opportunities that others may not have. For example:

Citizenship: Simply being born in this country affords you certain privileges that non-citizens will never access.

Class: Being born into a financially stable family can help guarantee your health, happiness, safety, education, intelligence, and future opportunities.

Sexual orientation: If you were born straight, every state in this country affords you privileges that non-straight folks have to fight the Supreme Court for.

Sex: If you were born male, you can assume that you can walk through a parking garage without worrying that you'll be raped and then have to deal with a defense attorney blaming it on what you were wearing.

Ability: If you were born able-bodied, you probably don't have to plan your life around handicap access, braille, or other special needs.

Gender identity: If you were born cisgender (that is, your gender identity matches the sex you were assigned at birth), you don't have to worry that using the restroom or locker room will invoke public outrage.

As you can see, belonging to one or more category of privilege, especially being a straight, white, middle-class, able-bodied male, can be like winning a lottery you didn't even know you were playing. But this is not to imply that any form of privilege is exactly the same as another, or that people lacking in one area of privilege understand what it's like to be lacking in other areas. Race discrimination is not equal to sex discrimination and so forth.

And listen: Recognizing privilege doesn't mean suffering guilt or shame for your lot in life. Nobody's saying that straight, white, middle-class, able-bodied males are all a bunch of assholes who don't work hard for what they have. Recognizing privilege simply means being aware that some people have to work much harder just to experience the things you take for granted (if they ever can experience them at all).

I know now that *I am* privileged in many ways. I am privileged as a natural-born white citizen. I am privileged as a cisgender woman. I am privileged as an able-bodied person. I am privileged that my first language is also our national language, and that I was born with an intellect and ambition that pulled me out of the poverty that I was otherwise destined for. I was privileged to be able to marry my way "up" by partnering with a privileged, middle-class, educated male who fully expected me to earn a college degree.

There are a million ways I experience privilege, and some that I certainly don't. But thankfully, intersectionality allows us to examine these varying dimensions and degrees of discrimination while raising awareness of the results of multiple systems of oppression at work.

Tell me: Are you a white person who's felt uncomfortable with the term "white privilege"? Does a more nuanced approach help you see your own privilege more clearly?

Source: Crosley-Corcoran 2014.

Just as whiteness is linked to class, it is also defined by gender and sexuality. White womanhood has historically been linked to sexual virtuosity, and for women, white privilege can hinge on maintaining an appearance of sexual respectability. Amy Wilkins (2004) uses the case of Puerto Rican wannabes—white girls and young women who draw on Puerto Rican cultural

styles to attract men of color—to explain how race, class, gender, and sexuality are co-constructed. Puerto Rican wannabes manipulate their gender and sexual identities to cross racial boundaries: by defying conceptions of white womanhood by dressing provocatively, they can claim to identify with Puerto Rican-ness. Notably, they reject whiteness through the rejection of mainstream notions of sexuality.

Catrin Lundström (2014) explored whiteness at the other end of the spectrum of white womanhood—Swedish whiteness. Through interviews with married female Swedish immigrants in the United States, Lundstrom found that the American husbands placed tremendous value on their wives' Swedish heritage. These American men viewed Swedish women as representing an ideal form of whiteness that encompasses white purity, beauty, and sensuality. Lundstrom's work adds nuance to sociological understandings of whiteness, as it allows us to see that there are degrees of whiteness in the United States and that these ideas of whiteness are intertwined with ideas of gender, sexuality, and white womanhood.

WHITENESS AND RACIAL CATEGORIES IN TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY AMERICA

Who is white in twenty-first-century America? As we saw in Chapter Two, the boundaries of whiteness have been blurry for a long time. What about today? Do controversies still exist about who is white?

One place to which we can look for an understanding of who is white in America today is the U.S. Census Bureau, the governmental body responsible for counting people in the United States and enumerating the demographic aspects of the U.S. population. It is useful to take a close look at the census categories, as official classifications both reflect and reinforce social categories.

To collect data on racial classification, the Census Bureau must provide definitions of each racial group. According to the 2010 definition, “white” refers to “a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicate their race(s) as ‘white’ or report entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Arab, Moroccan, or Caucasian.” This definition makes it clear that Middle Easterners are “white” in the United States, even if they may not consider themselves to be white. And what about Latinos? Many have origins in Spain, meaning they would qualify as “white” under this definition, as Spain is in Europe. Notably, this definition does not say that a person must have origins exclusively in Europe. Census categories and definitions, however, are not the end of the story; moreover, they change over time.

Racial boundaries are constantly in flux in terms of both their meanings and their limits. For example, what it means to be an Afghani in the United States changed in the aftermath of September 11 and the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan. Being Japanese American today means something very distinct from being Japanese American during World War II. Some groups have moved closer to whiteness, whereas others have moved further away. Let's consider how and why racial boundaries have changed and what these changes mean for the U.S. racial hierarchy. Even though (and perhaps because) whiteness is an important aspect of many people's reality, it is not always clear who is white. Moreover, the boundaries surrounding whiteness continue to be contested. Definitions of who is white vary across time and space because "white" is a racialized group, a group that is actively created and reinforced in daily interactions and practices (Small 1999).

Latinos/as and the Multiracial Hierarchy

Are Latinos white? Some scholars argue that Latinos are a "racialized other" and thus are all nonwhite (Itzigsohn and Dore Cabral 2001). Others contend that some Latinos are white (Rodríguez 2000). In the 2010 census, 16.3 percent of respondents reported that they were Hispanic or Latino. Among Hispanics, 53 percent identified their race as white; 2.5 percent as black; 1.4 percent as American Indian; 36.7 percent as other; and 6 percent as two or more races (Figure 7-1).

More than half of Latinos identified their race as white in the 2010 census. What are the implications of this identification? Can you be a white Latino? Or are all Latinos people of color? Sociologist Salvador Vidal-Ortiz (2007) explores the idea of being a white Puerto Rican, or what he refers to as a "**white person of color**": a person who appears to be white and yet identifies with a nonwhite group. This phrase appears contradictory, as "person of color" seems to be synonymous with "nonwhite." In response, Vidal-Ortiz argues that **racialization**, the process by which a group begins to be treated as a race, "unifies Puerto Ricans' racial experiences in the U.S., while skin color still operates as a distinct marker of access and treatment" (2007, 181). In short, white Puerto Ricans experience privilege as a result of their white skin, yet are still treated as people of color when their Puerto Rican-ness becomes evident through either their Spanish accent, their Spanish surname, or another marker that identifies them as Puerto Rican, such as their clothing or

white person of color A person who appears to be white and yet identifies with a nonwhite group.

racialization The process by which a group begins to be treated as a race.

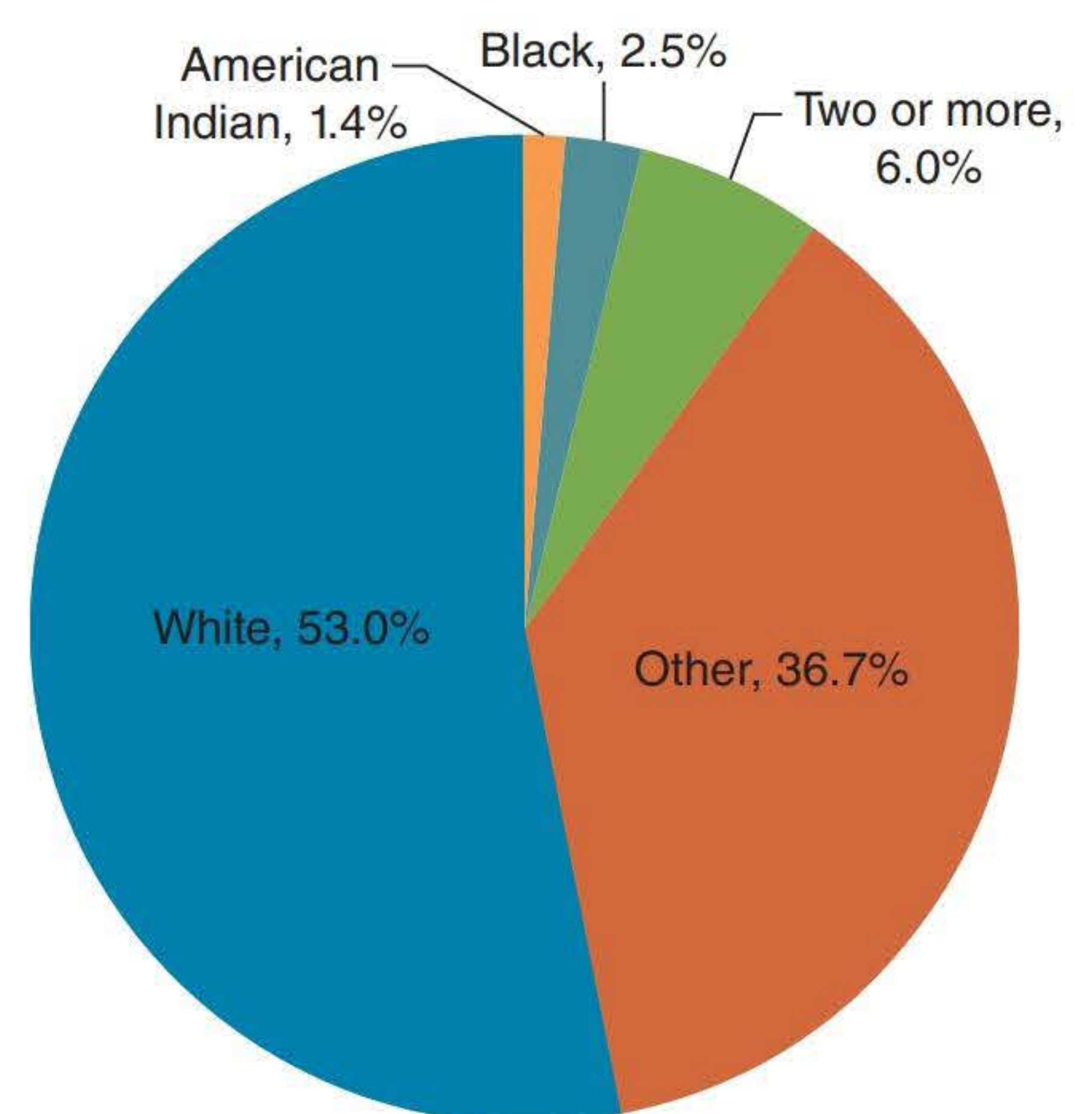
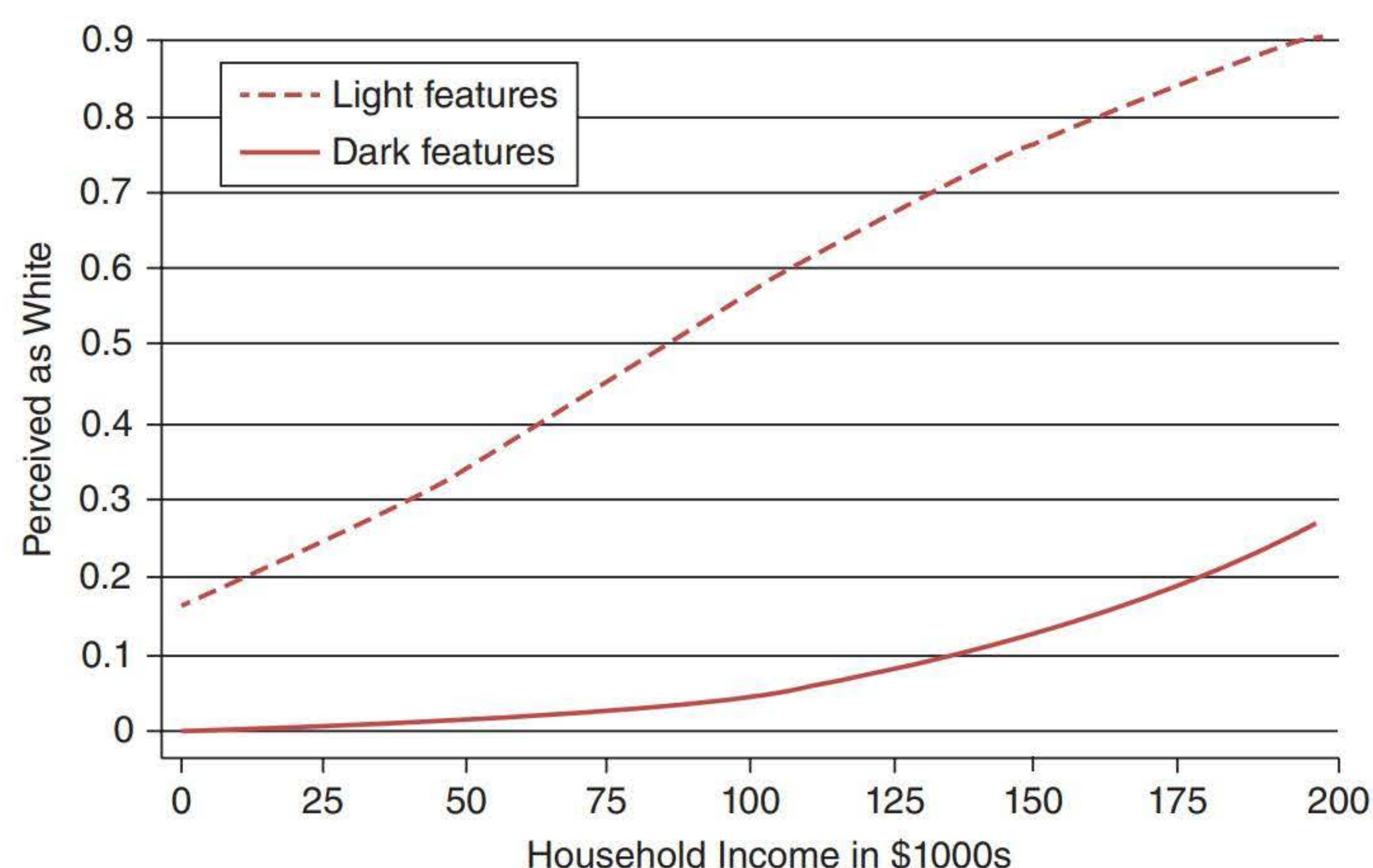


FIGURE 7-1.
Latino Racial Identifications in the U.S. Census
Over half of all Latinos self-identified as "white."

Source: Humes, Karen, Nicholas A. Jones, and Roberto R. Ramirez (2010).

FIGURE 7-2.
Probability of External
Classification as White by
Phenotype and Household
Income among Latinos/as

Source: Vargas (2015).



mannerisms. Elizabeth Aranda and Guillermo Rebollo-Gil (2004) found that white Puerto Ricans experience racism because of cultural markers such as language and demeanor.

Some Latinos are physically indistinguishable from whites and thus reap many of the benefits of white-skin privilege. However, not all Latinos who describe themselves as “white” have very light skin. For example, in the 1989 Latino National Political Survey, 32 percent of respondents with “very dark” skin identified as white, as did 36 percent of those with dark skin and 54 percent of those with medium skin. In that survey, light-skinned Latinos were the most likely to identify as white, yet many dark-skinned Latinos also did (Golash-Boza and Darity 2008). What does it mean to have a dark-skinned Latino identify herself as white? Does saying you are white make you white?

In a more recent study, Nicholas Vargas (2015) found that although 40 percent of Latinos/as self-identified as white, only 6 percent reported being classified as white by others. Moreover, they found that Latinos/as with light skin and of higher class status were more likely to be identified by others as white. Notably, many Latinos who are identified as white by others do not self-identify as white (Figure 7-2).

Part of the reason for the lack of concurrence between skin color and racial identification is that many Latinos do not identify with U.S. racial categories (Rodríguez 2000). In 2010, 18.5 million Hispanics marked their race on the U.S. census as “other,” whereas only 600,000 non-Hispanics chose this designation. The fact that Hispanics made up 97 percent of those classified as

“some other race” indicates that Hispanics are the most likely to see themselves as outside of the U.S. racial hierarchy—that is, as having a racial identity that does not fit neatly into the U.S. system of racial classification. And because of the ways Latinos are racialized in the United States, few Latinos see themselves as unproblematically white. Their whiteness is always open to contestation.

Arab Americans, North Africans, Middle Easterners, and Their Place in the U.S. Racial Hierarchy

North Africans and Middle Easterners were given the official designation of “white” on the U.S. census, in part because these groups lobbied to be defined as such in the early twentieth century. At the time, whiteness gave people in the United States access to citizenship rights denied to nonwhites (Haney-Lopez 2006). Many North Africans, however, do not view themselves as white. Mostafa Hefny (pictured at bottom, right) is one example. Hefny was born in Egypt and came to the United States in 1978. When he arrived in the United States, he was classified as white because of his origins in Egypt, which is in North Africa. Hefny, who considers himself a Nubian and an African, has been trying to get his racial classification changed to black ever since. Thus far, he has been unsuccessful (J. S. Smith 2012). What about other North Africans or Middle Easterners? Do they see themselves as white?

A study of Lebanese immigrants in Michigan found that Lebanese Shi’a Muslims readily embraced a white identity. These Lebanese immigrants enjoyed the privilege of being white and thus having an unmarked identity unless they chose to wear a *hijab*. Sociologists Kristine Ajrouch and Abdi Kusow (2007) describe a Lebanese woman who had cordial relations with her neighbor until she decided to cover her head. Once she began to wear a hijab, her neighbors’ behavior toward her changed. Her display of religious identity threatened her standing as an unmarked white person.

In 2003, researchers in Michigan conducted a survey of Arab Americans in the Detroit area, home to the largest concentration of Arab Americans in the United States. In this survey of over 1,000 Arab Americans, 57 percent identified themselves as Christian and 41 percent identified



▲ According to the definitions used in the 2010 U.S. census, both people in these pictures should check “white.” This categorization will likely change in the 2020 census.

themselves as Muslim. About three-quarters had finished high school. Most were Lebanese or Syrian (43 percent) or Iraqi (30 percent). About 70 percent responded “yes” when asked if “Arab American” described them. As for race, about two-thirds identified their race as “white,” and another third as “other” (Baker et al. 2003). Not surprisingly, Arab Americans who were Christian were more likely to identify as white (Ajrouch and Jamal 2007). These studies show that most, but not all, Arab Americans identify as white, but that being white is not always consistent with a Muslim religious identity.

Although the United States is a secular nation, the presumption is that Christianity is the norm. People with other religious faiths can be subject to exclusion on this basis. And although not all whites are Christians, there is an assumption that whiteness is linked to Christianity. When we learn that someone is not Christian, his or her whiteness can also be put into question.

For over three decades, Americans of Middle Eastern or North African descent have lobbied for a census category that reflects them. In 2016, the Office of Management and Budget (which decides on census classifications) proposed the addition of such a category for the 2020 census. “Middle Eastern and North African” will include people with origins in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, or Yemen, as well as those who identify as Amazigh or Berber, Arab, Assyrian, Bedouin, Chaldean, Copt, Druze, Kurdish, or Syriac. In the future, other groups, such as Turks, Sudanese, Somalis, Afghans, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Cypriots, Djiboutians, Georgians, Mauritians, South Sudanese, and Turkish Cypriots, may be added to the definition. Of course, the addition of this census category will include a change in the definitions of other racial and ethnic categories.

A potential downside of this change in the U.S. census is that it could emphasize the racialization of American Middle Easterners and North Africans. In particular, the conflation of Middle Easterners with terrorism has led to widespread discrimination. For example, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015, the governors of thirty U.S. states announced their refusal to accept Syrian refugees (Seipel 2015). This policy is discrimination on the basis of national origin, which U.S. law prohibits. Although closely related, discrimination on the basis of national origin is distinct from racial discrimination. However, this discrimination against Syrians, as well as Muslims and Middle Easterners more generally, may suggest that these groups are being racialized as not white.

Arab American—AKA White Without the Privilege

On August 12, 2016, thirty-seven-year-old Khalid Jabara was shot and killed on his front porch. Stanley Vernon Majors, a sixty-one-year-old white man and Jabara's next door neighbor, was charged with murder and hate crimes as police say he shot Jabara. As of this writing, the trial is still pending. Writer Mirna Zaher reflects on what this incident means for Arab Americans.

This is not an article I wanted to write. It's not something easy to write. But something has changed within the past few days. That something has a name, and it's Khalid Jabara. Khalid, a Lebanese Christian Arab was murdered by his neighbor after years of racism, and attempted harm. I didn't write this as a way to vent hatred, but as a way to express the frustration all American Arabs (Christian, Jew, and Muslim) know to be true, that legally we may be considered white, but we sure as hell don't have any of the privilege. His death hit me hard. This could have been me, it could have been my sister, or my brother, it could have been so many more people I care about, and that thought paralyzed me.

Growing up as an Arab in a post-9/11 America was not exactly the walk in the park you would expect it to be. People were racist, more often than not. I remember the first time someone called me a terrorist, I remember not standing up for the other Middle Eastern kid in my class because I was afraid they would turn on me too. I remember watching my mom come home in tears because her manager had spit on her and told her "go back to your country." I remember so much, and this . . . this makes me understand just how lucky I was to only get insults and hurt feelings. The racism shown to my family has gotten significantly better as the years progress, but once Donald Trump based his campaign on racist propaganda and slander, we once again became the enemy. I grew up being told that it was not okay for me to be proud of where I come from, that I was to put my race on the census, and legal forms as white, that I was not an Arab American, but rather a white American. But if I'm white then tell me this, how many times does a white person get searched at an airport, how many times did your father consider changing your last name to its English translation, how many times have you had to brush off a racist joke that stung like a bee. My name, my face, my personality, everything about me screams that I am a fraud living in this white category you placed me in. Not only do Arab Americans get treated as less than most other racial groups of Americans, but our cultural rights and identification amongst each other are being taken away too.

(continued)

Voices.



Continued

Khalid Jabrar was just another example of this. He would still be alive if he were white, oh wait he was, but no one saw him as white. His death hurts because he looks so much like my family members, his life is so similar to mine. This makes me understand better, what it is that the Black Lives Matter Movement is fighting for, the only difference is that when an African American dies due to police negligence the media will talk about it for weeks, by tomorrow the name Khalid Jabara will probably be nowhere to be found in relation to media stations, because it isn't just that we Arabs are white without the privilege, but that our lives simply don't matter. We don't matter. I don't matter. . . . Khalid Jabara's death may be kicked out of focus in the following days, but I promise I will never forget. I will never stop fighting for his life to mean something, because it means something to me. From one Christian Arab to another, May you find peace brother, and may your family find the justice you deserve.

Source: Zaher 2016.

multiracial A person whose parents identify with different racial groups.

Multiracial Identification and the U.S. Racial Hierarchy

What about **multiracials**, people whose parents identify with different racial groups? Are they white? Or does the one-drop rule persist in our society? Three percent of all respondents in the 2010 U.S. census identified with more than one race. Among these respondents, the largest group—accounting for 20 percent of all multiracials—identified as both white and black. They were followed closely by those who identified as white and some other race (19%), white and Asian (18%), and white/American Indian (16%). When we look at within-group differences, it is remarkable to note that nearly half of all Native Americans reported more than one race, making this group the most likely to identify with more than one race.

Since the introduction of the option to choose more than one race on the U.S. census in 2000, a host of sociological studies have been launched designed to understand the meanings behind multiracial identifications. Just looking at the numbers from the most recent U.S. census, it is hard to discern what they mean. Do people identify with more than one race because they have one parent who is one race and another who is of a different race? Or is it because they see themselves as having a multiracial heritage, with ancestry from more than one group? What factors influence people's decision to identify with more than one race?

The majority of African Americans in the United States have white and/or Native American ancestry, yet most identify as blacks, not as multiracials. Although Native Americans are the most likely to identify as multiracials, many Native Americans with white or black ancestry identify as Native Americans and not as multiracials. The reason is that in U.S. society, *multiracial* usually refers to a person with two parents of different races. Even then, not everyone adopts the label.

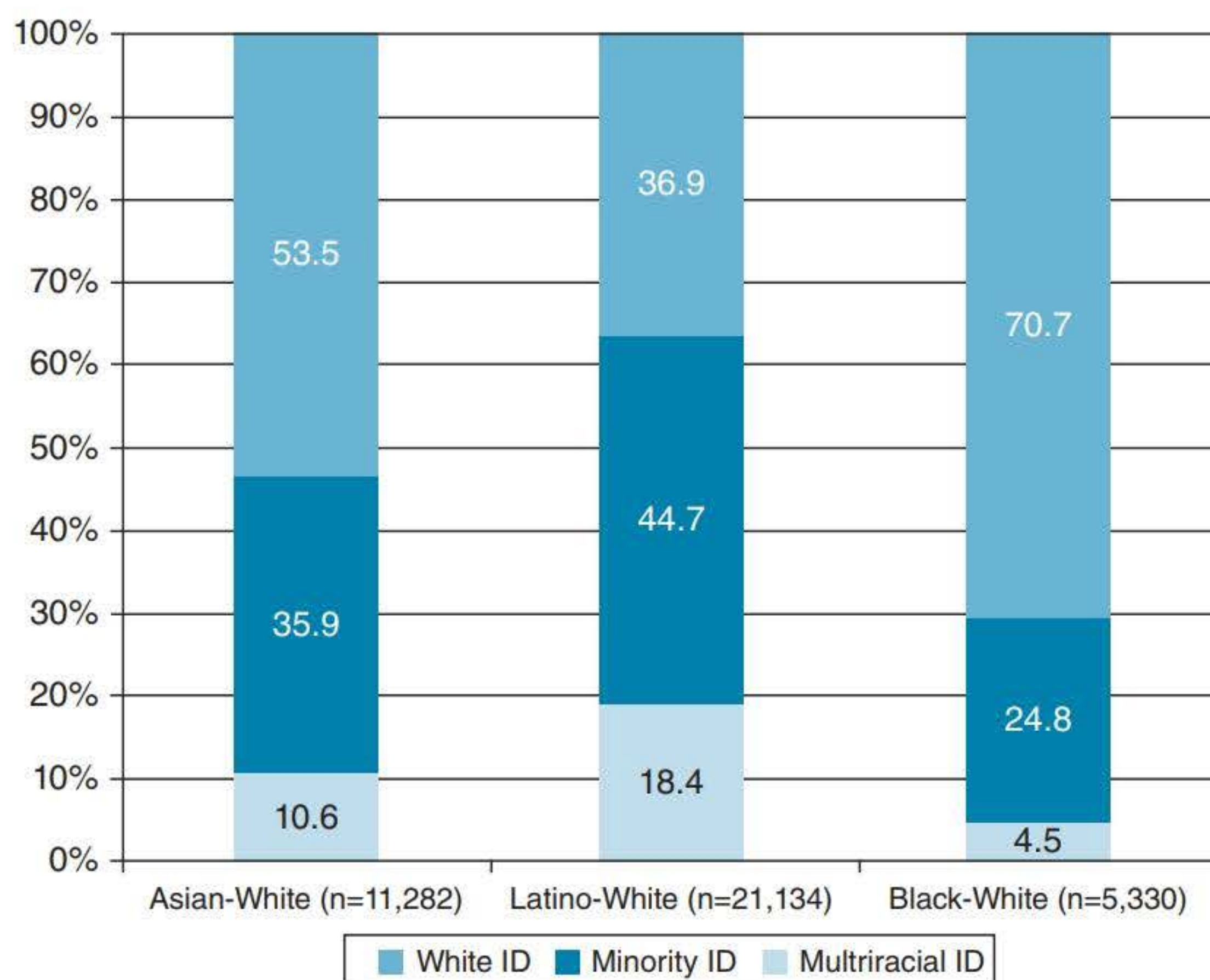
Today, about 13 percent of marriages in the United States involve persons of different races. Native Americans, Latinos, and Asians are the most likely to intermarry, and black and white people are the least likely (Lee and Bean 2004). When these couples have children, some of them may identify as multiracial, and some may not. Kerry Ann Rockquemore and Patricia Arend (2002) studied a broad sample of people with one white parent and one black parent and found that 61 percent identified as biracial, 13 percent as black, and 4 percent as white, with the remainder reporting themselves as having situational or no racial identities. Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) argue that these identities are influenced by physical appearance, socioeconomic status, and social networks.

Wendy Roth (2005) took a close look at 2000 census data and found quite a bit of variability in multiracial identifications. Roth looked at a subsample of children who had one white parent and one nonwhite parent and parsed out how these parents identified their children. She found that 53 percent of children who had one black parent and one white parent were identified by their parents as both black and white on the 2000 census, while 11 percent were identified as white and 25 percent as black. Remarkably, 25 percent of children with one white parent and one Asian or Pacific Islander parent were designated as white, as were 34 percent of children with one white and one American Indian parent. These findings raise further questions about who is white while also pointing to the fact that it is more difficult for multiracials with one black parent to identify as white than for those who have one parent who is Asian or American Indian.

In a more recent study, Lauren Davenport (2016) analyzed data from surveys conducted with 38,000 incoming college freshmen. She found significant variation in how children with parents of distinct racial backgrounds identify racially. In the study, 70.7 percent of those with one black and one white parent self-identified as multiracial. By contrast, only 36.9 percent of their counterparts with one Latino and one white parent identified as multiracial. Among students with one Asian parent and one white parent, 53.5 percent self-identified as multiracial. (For full data, see Figure 7-3.)

FIGURE 7-3.
**Percentage of Multiracial
 Children Who Identify
 as White, Minority, or
 Multiracial**

Source: Davenport (2016).



Will the United States Continue to Be a White-Majority Society?

In 2016, the Pew Research Center issued a report predicting that by 2055, whites will no longer be the majority racial group in the United States. The report further predicts that by 2065, nonwhites will constitute 54 percent of the nation's population, and one in four people in the United States will be Hispanic or Latino (Cohn and Caumont 2016).

Social scientists who have considered the future of racial categories do not agree in their predictions of how the United States will look in the future. Some scholars think that the category of whiteness will expand to include some Latinos and Asians; others think that Latinos and Asians will join the "collective black"; and still others argue that the United States will become a triracial society, similar to Latin American countries. Let's take a look at these possible racial schemas.

The White/Nonwhite Divide

The United States has a long history of denying rights to all those labeled as nonwhite, and many scholars argue that this tradition will continue, even as the country's demography changes. In 1970, Latinos and Asians accounted for 5 percent and 1 percent of the U.S. population, respectively (Lee 2008).

By 2011, the U.S. census estimated that Asians were nearly 6 percent of the U.S. population and Latinos nearly 17 percent. White people still made up 63 percent of the population but have slowly been approaching the point of losing majority status in the country. Despite the shrinking size of the population identified as white, some scholars argue that white people will continue to retain dominance in the United States and that all other groups will be defined primarily as nonwhite.

Alejandro Portes, Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, and William Haller (2005), for example, have found that immigrants from Latin America and Asia experience exclusion and disadvantage in the United States that prevents them from achieving upward mobility. Because of these disadvantages and the fact that most new immigrants to the United States are physically distinct from white people, the researchers argue that Asians and Latinos are unlikely to be allowed entry into the white category, as previous waves of European immigrants were. For these scholars, the changing demography is not likely to change the basic structure of the racial hierarchy or the definition of whiteness. Others, however, think that the category of whiteness will expand.

The Black/Nonblack Divide

George Yancey (2003) predicts that the boundaries of whiteness will expand to include everyone who is not African American, permitting whites to avoid becoming a minority. Yancey bases his argument on his findings that African Americans experience exclusion in ways that Latino and Asian Americans do not. Drawing from a nationwide telephone survey, Yancey has found that white people disparage black people more than Latinos and Asians. He also found that Latinos' and Asians' political beliefs are more closely aligned with white people's than with black people's, signaling their allegiance to white people. Based on these findings, Yancey concludes that white people will not become a numerical minority any time soon.

Other scholars (Warren and Twine 1997; Gallagher 2004; Twine and Gallagher 2008) agree with this prediction. These researchers argue that the white category has expanded in the United States to include most people not identified or associated with blackness. Charles Gallagher (2004), for example, argues that the United States is experiencing a "racial redistricting," whereby many Asians and Latinos are included in the white category because of their cultural and physical similarities with whites. These scholars argue that "black" is the most stigmatized category in the United States and that everyone else is measured in reference to African Americans.

honorary white People who are not considered white but can be treated as if they were white, such as some light-skinned Latinos, Asians, and multiracials.

collective black People who are black, as well as other groups that receive similar treatment as black people, such as Hmong or dark-skinned Puerto Ricans.

The Triracial Order: Latin Americanization

Many sociologists argue that there will be a Latin Americanization of the U.S. racial hierarchy—that is, that the racial schema will change from a binary to a triracial order. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2013) contends that although there has traditionally been a biracial divide between whites and nonwhites in the United States, this racial order is changing. The primary engine for this change is the recent increase in Latino and Asian immigration—today, Latinos make up more than 15 percent of the U.S. population and Asians about 6 percent. Another important factor is the rise in intermarriage: about one in twenty marriages is now interracial (Lee 2008). Because of these and other changes, the racial order in the United States is evolving into a triracial order, with whites at the top, “**honorary whites**” in the middle, and the “**collective black**” at the bottom.

Bonilla-Silva posits that the white group will expand to include assimilated white Latinos and Native Americans, as well as some multiracials (particularly the children of whites and Asians). The honorary white group will contain light-skinned Latinos, many East and South Asians, Middle Easterners, and multiracials. The collective black group will include Vietnamese and Hmong Americans, dark-skinned Latinos, Native Americans, and blacks. According to this thesis, the honorary white group will serve as a buffer between the collective black and the white groups. Thus, as the U.S. population becomes primarily nonwhite, whites will not have to worry about losing power and privilege.

To test his thesis, Bonilla-Silva (2013) takes a look at the data to see (1) if there are socioeconomic and attitudinal distinctions among the three groups, (2) if whites look more kindly upon members of the honorary white group than the collective black group, and (3) if there is growing solidarity among members of the collective black group. He finds all of these claims to be true, with some caveats. For example, the median income for Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in the United States is about half that of Argentines and Chileans, who tend to be much lighter-skinned. The median per capita income for Hmong and Cambodian Americans is about a third that of Chinese, Japanese, and Indian Americans. In terms of self-identification, Dominicans and Puerto Ricans in the United States are much more likely to identify as black than are Argentines or Chileans. Although half of Mexicans identify as white, over three-quarters of Chileans, Cubans, and Argentines identify as white in national surveys. The data for intermarriage are also striking: 93 percent of whites and

blacks marry within their own racial group, compared to 70 percent of Asians and Latinos and only 33 percent of Native Americans. Bonilla-Silva uses this evidence to argue that a triracial system is emerging in the United States and that this system will work to maintain white dominance and color-blind racism.

One criticism of the Latin Americanization thesis is that a two-tier racial order has never existed in the United States. In colonial times, Edward Murguía and Rogelio Saenz (2002) argue, there were three groups: English whites at the top, white indentured servants in the middle, and African slaves and Native Americans at the bottom. Later, native-born Americans of British descent came to be at the top, with southern and eastern Europeans in the middle and Asians, blacks, and Native Americans at the bottom.

There is reason to believe that patterns of racial self-identification vary across generations. This means that the children of some census-defined Hispanics might choose not to identify with the Hispanic label. Persons of Hispanic descent could potentially opt out of the Latino category and identify as black or white, while others could disassociate themselves from the labels of black and white and adopt “Hispanic” or “Latino” as their racial identification. Social scientists need to consider how Latinos racially self-identify and what factors affect those choices. How have these classifications changed historically? How are these changes related to official race classifications?

CHANGES IN RACIAL AND ETHNIC CLASSIFICATIONS

How have racial and ethnic classifications changed over time? Every ten years, a U.S. census is conducted, which includes at least one question about racial identification. These racial and ethnic classifications are constantly in flux, as Figure 7-4 shows. Almost immediately after the 2010 census was completed, discussions began within the Office of Management and Budget, which oversees official racial classifications, about how the “Hispanic/Latino” question should be asked on the census. The debate centered on whether the census should include a separate question on Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, or if “Hispanic/Latino” should be considered a race, like white, black, or Asian.

In the 2010 census, the question “Are you Hispanic or Latino?” was followed by a separate race question, which gave people fifteen options that did not include “Hispanic.” In 2010, Hispanic/Latino was officially an ethnicity.



▲ These three people are from the major racial groups in Peru: indigenous, black, and white. If they were to migrate to the United States, would all three be classified as Latina/o?

~ 1960 onward: People could choose their own race.

~ 2000 onward: Americans could be recorded in more than one race category on the census form.

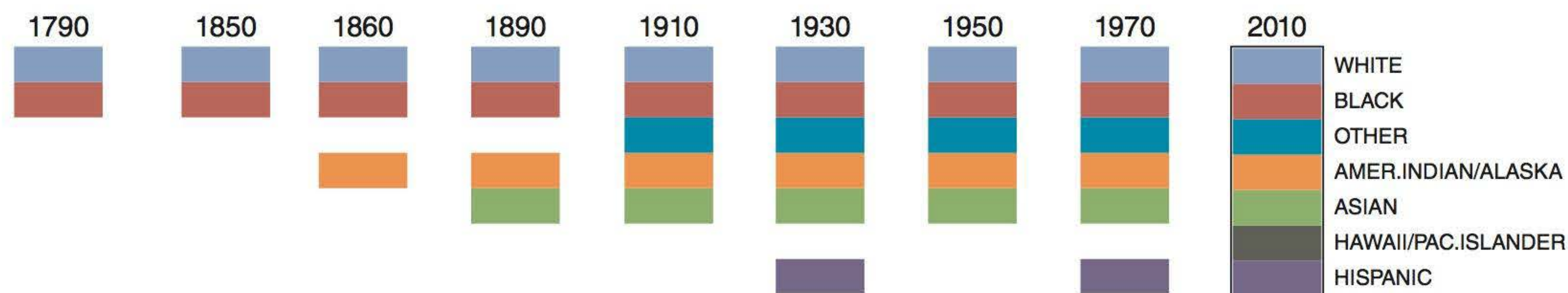


FIGURE 7-4.

How U.S. Census Race Categories Have Changed over Time

Source: Pew Research (2015).

However, there are many reasons you might consider Hispanic/Latino to be a race. In fact, in 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau held a press conference in which it recommended that the question “Are you Hispanic/Latino?” no longer be asked as a separate question on ethnicity. Instead, it proposed that Hispanic/Latino be included as one of the options in the race question. In 2016, Census Bureau officials presented a proposal that would combine separate questions on race and Hispanic origin into one. As of this writing, this is the question that is most likely to be used in the 2020 census.

The discussions over the 2020 census revolve around important questions in U.S. society: Is Hispanic a race or an ethnicity? Are Hispanics white, black, or something else? Many scholars are concerned that if Hispanic were enumerated as a racial category, we would lose important information, namely, data about the different experiences of white, indigenous, and black Hispanics. People would have the option of choosing multiple races, meaning black Hispanics could select both black and Hispanic as their racial categories, but many race scholars are concerned that most Hispanics would only choose the Hispanic category, and we thus would have less information about Hispanics.

This controversy over racial categories in the census is part of a long history of changing racial categories in the United States. The only times in U.S. history that the same racial categories have been used in two consecutive censuses were in 1910 and 1920. Otherwise, the categories have changed each time there has been a new census. This constant flux reflects social constructions of difference rather than real differences between people.

The first census was conducted in 1790. That census did not include a direct question about race, but it did include an enumeration of free white men, free white women, other free persons, and slaves. Who was free and who was enslaved was important at the time, as slaves were counted as three-fifths of a person for the purpose of determining congressional representation.

In 1890, eight racial groups were listed on the census, half of which were for people of African descent—black, mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon. This was prior to the officialization of the one-drop rule, according to which persons with any black ancestry were considered black. The other four races included on the 1890 census were Japanese, Chinese, Indian, and white—a reflection of immigration trends at the time.

In 1900, black was the only option for people of African descent. The category of mulatto was reintroduced in 1910. Then, in 1930, for the first and only time, Mexican was listed as a race. Previously, Mexicans had been considered white (Lee 1993). In 2000, for the first time, people were allowed to list more than one race. These changes show that racial categories are a reflection of the time and not an enumeration of fixed differences between people. Racial categorizations also reflect the racial ideology of the time, which, as we have seen, changes according to social and political circumstances.

The question of whether Latinos are a racial or an ethnic group is far from settled. For many scholars, Latinos are a racialized group and should be considered people of color (Alcoff 2000; Itzigsohn and Cabral 2001). According to the 2000 and 2010 censuses, Latinos can be of any race—including white—as Latino is an ethnicity, not a race. The U.S. Census Bureau will most likely change Latino from an ethnic to a racial category in the 2020 census.

whitening The process by which a person and his or her offspring become whiter as a result of social status and/or intermarriage.

Social, Cultural, and Intergenerational Whitening in Latin America

Scholars of race in Latin America argue that **whitening**—the process of becoming whiter as a result of a change in social status and/or intermarriage—tones down racial conflict in the region. Whitening can occur in three ways:

- First, intergenerational whitening occurs when a black person and a white person have a child, and the child is considered whiter than the black parent.
- Second, social whitening occurs when a person is born black but through an increase in class status is considered white or whiter in some situations.
- Third, cultural whitening occurs when a person is born Indian but acculturates to the dominant culture and becomes white or whiter in some situations.

Intergenerational whitening is used in conjunction with blacks or Indians; social whitening is more commonly used to discuss people of African descent; and cultural whitening is more commonly used to describe processes of incorporation for people of indigenous descent.

The whitening process works at the levels of both practice and ideology: people hope to “improve the race” through marrying lighter-skinned partners,

(continued)

and the governments of many Latin American countries have promulgated a policy of *mestizaje* (racial and cultural mixture) for the purpose of whitening the nation (Graham 1990; Skidmore 1993). The possibility of whitening is dependent on a definition of race that is not based solely on color or descent, but on other changeable factors.

Many scholars contend that in Latin America, race incorporates social and cultural characteristics (Rodríguez 2000). Jorge Duany argues that in the Caribbean, “phenotype and social status rather than biological descent define a person’s racial identity” (1998, 150). Nancy Landale and R. S. Oropesa posit that in Latin America, “definitions of race are more fluid and ambiguous than is the case in the United States” (2002, 233). According to these scholars, the lack of rigidity in Latin American racial classifications allows a person in this region to change his or her racial identity.

Scholars of Afro-Latin America have argued that blacks can be whitened through a change in social status. Winthrop Wright, for example, claims that in Venezuela, “when a black escaped poverty, he or she ceased to be socially black” (1990, 10). Wright goes on to explain that “occasionally, financial and political success socially whitened black Venezuelans. For them and their white counterparts, clothes, education, language, social position, and the accumulation of wealth combined to make an individual whiter in the social context” (10). Wade argues that in Colombia, the trope “money whitens” does not mean that very dark-skinned people are actually classified as white, but that “rich black or mulatto people are treated as if they were white (or nearly white)” (1993, 339).

Studies of indigeneity in Latin America contend that classification with labels such as *cholo*, *indio*, or *mestizo* is not determined by skin color, but by cultural factors, including geographical origin and

social standing (see van den Berghe 1974; Bouricaud 1975; de la Cadena 2000). As indigenusness is conceptualized in Peru, a person with brown skin and black hair could be labeled as white (*blanco*), Indian (*indio*), or either of the two intermediate labels: *cholo* or *mestizo*. According to these studies, what determines one’s racial status is not skin color, but level of education, cultural markers such as language and dress, and geographic and class location. In Peru, descendants of indigenous people can change their racial status from *indio* to *mestizo* by abandoning indigenous cultural forms, obtaining a formal education, and migrating to the coast (as this entails leaving highland Indian villages). Highly educated Peruvians are considered white, and acculturated Indians are considered *mestizos*. Subsequent work on indigenous identities in Peru contests the simplicity of this framework, yet these studies do not address the absence of African-descended Peruvians from these discussions, nor do they dismiss the idea of cultural whitening for Indians (de la Cadena 2000; Weismantel 2001; García 2005).

Scholars of race in Latin America have found evidence of intergenerational whitening in Brazil and Colombia. One study found that highly educated nonwhite Brazilians are more likely than their less educated counterparts to label their children white (Schwartzman 2007). Data limitations did not allow Luisa Schwartzman to discern whether this is because class status directly influences racial self-identification or because higher-class brown Brazilians are lighter in skin tone and thus closer to the boundary between white and brown, which facilitates their “boundary crossing.” Research by Peter Wade (1993) in Colombia and Edward Telles (2004) in Brazil would support this latter claim, as they argue that only racially ambiguous people have the option of shifting racial categories.

REVISITING THE DEFINITIONS OF RACE AND ETHNICITY

How would one determine whether Latino is a racial or an ethnic category? One way to look at this question is to use the definitions given in Chapter One and consider whether being Latino refers more to phenotype, ancestry, and descent or to place and culture.

Race: Categories of people based on a hierarchical worldview that associates ancestry, descent, and phenotype with cultural and moral attributes.

Ethnicity: Group identities based on notions of similar and shared history, culture, and kinship.

It seems that the category of Latino refers quite specifically to shared history, as it references people with origins in Latin America. One potential caveat is that many Latinos trace their origins to California or Texas, former Spanish colonies that have been part of the United States since the mid-nineteenth century. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that Latinos can trace their origins to a place that was once a Spanish colony. The issue with this definition is that places not traditionally considered part of Latin America, such as the Philippines and Equatorial Guinea, are also former Spanish colonies. Are Filipinos Latinos? Officially, Filipinos are Asians, but Anthony Ocampo (2014) found in his interviews with Filipinos that many identified with Latinos because of their shared history of Spanish colonialism and the Catholic religion.

What about culture? Language is one of the most salient aspects of cultural identity, and being Latino is associated with speaking Spanish. However, many people who identify as Latino do not speak Spanish. These include U.S.-born Latinos who never learned Spanish, Brazilians who speak Portuguese, and perhaps even Haitians who speak Creole. We also need to think about how to classify indigenous migrants from Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador whose first language is Maya, Quechua, or another indigenous language. Does the Spanish language unify them?

Ethnicity is principally about culture, and there are a variety of cultural elements that people in the United States associate with being Latino, such as salsa dancing, eating tacos, and having a quinceañera party for fifteen-year-old girls. However, there are many Latinos who do not participate in these cultural events. Dominican Americans may be more likely to dance to bachata; Puerto Ricans eat rice and beans but not tacos; and salsa music is rarely heard in Brazil. Despite these nuances, it would be fair to say that there are rhetorics

of culture, language, and place associated with being Latino. The argument in favor of considering “Latino” an ethnicity or an ethnic group is that the term invokes an array of cultural practices—it relies on a discourse of culture and place, even though it is easy to poke holes in this rhetoric.

What about race? How could one make the argument that Latino is a race? The category of Latino has not traditionally been considered a race. Yet, it is possible that racial categories can emerge. A variety of sociologists argue that “Latino” is emerging as a racialized category (Haney-Lopez 2006; Golash-Boza and Darity 2008; Vasquez 2011; Bonilla-Silva 2010). In order for “Latino” to be considered a race, one would have to argue that the label invokes a discourse of phenotype and ancestry.

Anthony Ocampo (2014) interviewed Filipinos, many of whom told him that people often thought they were Latino because of their tan skin, dark hair, and Spanish surnames. In terms of descent, there is a presumption that if two Latinos have a child, that child will be Latino. In the case of Cameron Diaz, for example, many people consider her to be Latina because her father’s parents are from Cuba. The argument that Latino is a racial category rests on the facts that the term *Latino* invokes phenotype and ancestry.

racialized assimilation The process through which immigrants adopt the racial identities of their host country.

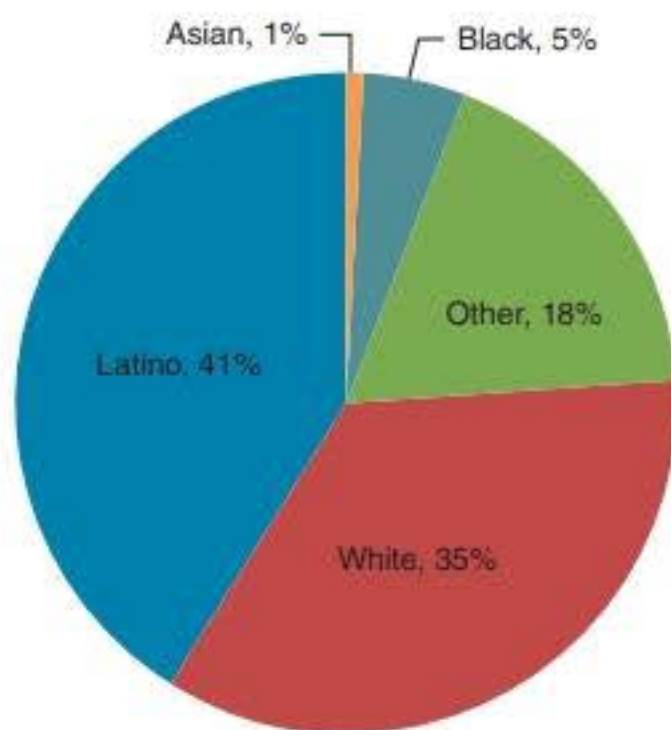


FIGURE 7-5.
Racial Identification in 2002 National Survey of Latinos

When given the option to identify racially as “Latino,” a plurality of Latinos identified as such.

Source: Golash-Boza and Darity (2008).

This phenotypical diversity raises the question of how Latinos themselves identify. Although the 2010 U.S. census did not include Latino as a racial category, other surveys do. Golash-Boza and Darity (2008) examined the factors that influence how Latinos identify racially on surveys and found that just under half of the self-identified Latino respondents to the 2002 National Survey of Latinos reported their race as Latino (Figure 7-5). This marked a change from the 1989 Latino National Political Survey, on which only 18 percent of respondents reported their race as Latino. Golash-Boza and Darity also found that respondents who had experienced discrimination and those with darker skin were less likely to identify as white. The association of dark skin and experiences of discrimination with a Latino identity signals that Latino is a racialized category. Based on these findings, it can be argued that Latinos are experiencing **racialized assimilation**, a process of assuming racial identities that make sense in the contemporary United States.

Other sociologists have considered why some Latinos self-identify as black. Research by Ginetta Candelario (2007), Silvio Torres-Saillant (2000), and Clara Rodríguez (2000) reveals that many Dominicans primarily identify as black.

For example, Rodríguez interviewed José Ali, a young, dark-skinned Dominican. On the census, he described himself as being of Hispanic ethnicity and his race as “other.” In the interview, he commented:

“By inheritance I am Hispanic. However, I identify more with Blacks due to the fact that to white America, if you are my color you are a nigger. I can’t change my color, and I do not wish to.” . . . When asked, “Why do you see yourself as Black?” his answer was: “Because, when I was jumped by whites I was not called a ‘spic,’ but I was called a ‘nigger.’” . . . Asked if his identity had changed over time, Ali said yes, “I realized that although I feel Hispanic, I was not seen as Hispanic or Latino, but as Black. Now I agree with whomever thinks I’m Black . . . no matter who I feel to be, I am categorized as Black.” (Rodríguez 2000, 140–141)

José Ali, like many Latinos with visible African ancestry, is treated as a black person in the United States. For this reason, he has internalized a black identity and considers himself to be racially black. One could argue that he also feels ethnically Hispanic, although he is not seen as racially Hispanic. Perhaps Latino is both a racial and an ethnic category.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we have seen that it is far from obvious who is white and who is not. We have also seen that there are benefits related to being classified as white, yet that these benefits are not spread evenly across the white population. White men, middle-class whites, Christian whites, and Anglo whites are those whose whiteness is much less likely to be put into question and for whom white privilege is most guaranteed. These whites—who fit most closely with hegemonic definitions of whiteness—are those most prone to seeing themselves as “normal” or as not having a racial identity. As long as we frame race and racism as problems of people of color, whites can absolve themselves from talking or thinking about race. This is where discussions of white privilege can be useful.

At the same time, we have seen that the definition of who is white has changed over time and is likely to change in the future. Racial categories are likely to change in terms of both official classification and everyday meanings associated with race. Official racial classifications change when interest groups push the U.S. government to count them differently or when scholars insist on classification schemes that more closely reflect our society. However, the

processes that produce changes in everyday classifications are much more complex. How will we know if and when light-skinned Latinos and Asians achieve honorary whiteness? What does it mean to say that the Hmong of Southeast Asia are treated as part of the collective black—does that imply that affirmative action policies should be retooled to reflect our new racial realities? What other changes would take place if our racial hierarchies were to change drastically? Perhaps most important, why does the structure of the racial hierarchy change but not the fact that we have a hierarchy in the first place?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

white privilege	188	racialization	197	collective black	206
wage of whiteness	188	multiracial	202	whitening	209
white person of color	197	honorary white	206	racialized assimilation	212

7.1 What is white privilege, and how does it work? (pp. 188–192)

- There are many unearned benefits associated with being white. The concept of white privilege helps us understand this dimension of racial dynamics in the United States.

Review

- » Who benefits from white privilege, and why?

Critical Thinking

- » Make a case for whether white privilege is a useful concept.
- » Does racism harm whites? What are the advantages and limitations of considering this question?

7.2 Does white privilege benefit all whites equally? (pp. 192–196)

- Whiteness and white privilege vary by class, gender, and sexuality.

Review

- » How is white privilege related to gender and sexuality?

Critical Thinking

- » What are some specific ways that whiteness may not afford men and women the same set of advantages?

7.3 Who is white in twenty-first-century America? (pp. 196–207)

- Whiteness carries advantages with it, yet it is not always clear who is white and who is not.

Review

- » Why and how do the meanings and limits of racial boundaries change?

Critical Thinking

- » Why do you think that racial boundaries shift over time?

7.4 How have racial and ethnic classifications changed over time? (pp. 207–210)

- Official racial categories change each time the census is administered.

Review

- » What are some examples of ways that racial categories have shifted over time?
- » What is the difference between social and cultural whitening?

Critical Thinking

- » Certain physical traits, such as skin color, nose shape, and hair type, have been selected as symbols of racial difference. What other physical traits could have been used? Why do you think certain traits have become more important than others?

7.5 Are Latinos a racial or an ethnic group? (pp. 211–213)

- Scholars disagree over whether “Latino” is a racial or an ethnic category.

Review

- » What are two key differences between race and ethnicity?

Critical Thinking

- » How is the debate over whether Hispanic/Latino is a race or an ethnicity a reflection of current racial ideologies?

Talking about Race

Imagine that while you are in line at the grocery store, you overhear one customer make a racist remark to another. What should you do? One strategy is to focus your attention on the person who is being targeted and to ignore the aggressor. Strike up a pleasant conversation about anything. For example, you can tell her you really like her shoes or ask her if she has seen a movie that is out in the cinema. Continue to talk to the person and create a safe space until the aggressor leaves.



The Family at Work Together (detail from the Ministry of Education frescoes). Diego Rivera. 1923-1928. Fresco. (*De Agostini Picture Library/M. Seemuller/Bridgeman Images*)

8

Educational Inequality

As You Read

- 8.1 What are the dimensions of racial inequality in our educational system?
- 8.2 How important is the historical legacy of unequal educational opportunities?
- 8.3 How can we explain the continuing gap in the educational achievements of white, Asian, black, Native American, and Latino students?

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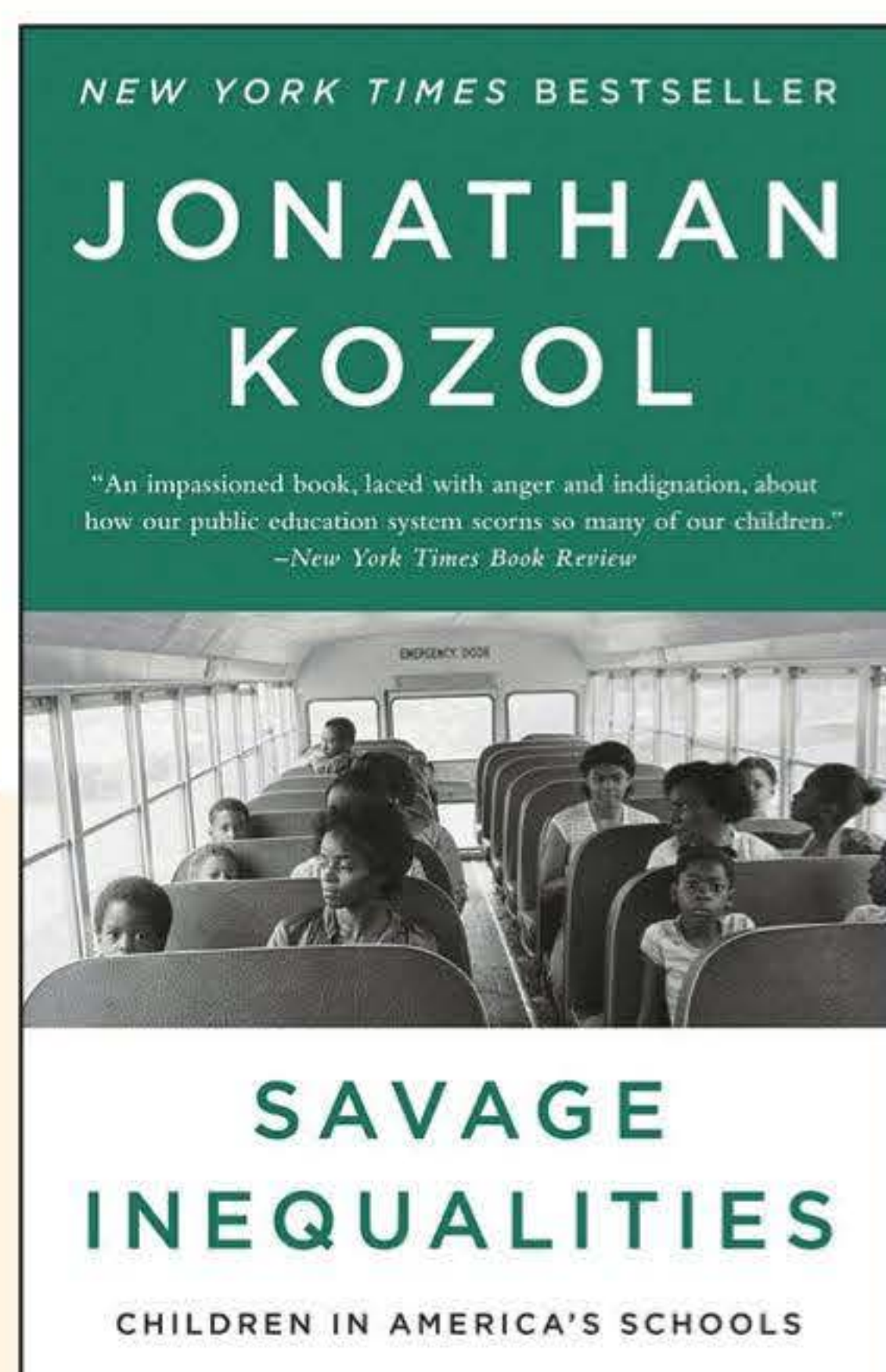
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In *Savage Inequalities*, Jonathan Kozol vividly describes the conditions in a school in the Bronx, New York, where 90 percent of the children are black or Latino. As you read this description, think about what the physical conditions of Public School 261 say about our commitment to public education.

In order to find Public School 261 in District 10, a visitor is told to look for a mortician's office. The funeral home, which faces Jerome Avenue in the North Bronx, is easy to identify by its green awning. The school is next door, in a former roller-skating rink. No sign identifies the building as a school. A metal awning frame without an awning supports a flagpole, but there is no flag.

I ask the principal where her children go to school. They are enrolled in private school, she says.

"Lunchtime is a challenge for us," she explains. "Limited space obliges us to do it in three shifts, 450 children at a time."

Textbooks are scarce and children have to share their social studies books. The principal says there is one full-time pupil counselor and another who is here two days a week: a ratio of 930 children to one counselor. The carpets are patched and sometimes taped together to conceal an open space. "I could use some new rugs," she observes.

To make up for the building's lack of windows and the crowded feeling that results, the staff puts plants and fish tanks in the corridors. Some of the plants are flourishing. Two boys, released from class, are in a corridor beside a tank, their noses pressed against the glass. A school of pinkish fish inside the tank are darting back and forth. Farther down the corridor a small Hispanic girl is watering the plants.

Two first grade classes share a single room without a window, divided only by a blackboard. Four kindergartens and a sixth grade class of Spanish-speaking children have been packed into a single room in which, again, there is no window. A second grade bilingual class of 37 children has its own room but again there is no window.

By eleven o'clock, the lunchroom is already packed with appetite and life. The kids line up to get their meals, then eat them in ten minutes. After that, with no place they can go to play, they sit and wait until it's time to line up and go back to class.

On the second floor I visit four classes taking place within another undivided space. The room has a low ceiling. File cabinets and movable blackboards give a small degree of isolation to each class. Again, there are no windows.

The library is a tiny, windowless and claustrophobic room. I count approximately 700 books. Seeing no reference books, I ask a teacher if encyclopedias and other reference books are kept in classrooms.

“We don’t have encyclopedias in classrooms,” she replies. “That is for the suburbs.”

The school, I am told, has 26 computers for its 1,300 children. There is one small gym and children get one period, and sometimes two, each week. Recess, however, is not possible because there is no playground. “Head Start,” the principal says, “scarcely exists in District 10. We have no space.”

The school, I am told, is 90 percent black and Hispanic; the other 10 percent are Asian, white or Middle Eastern.

Source: Kozol 2012, 103–106.

Education is meant to be the great equalizer. Every child in the United States, regardless of race, gender, or citizenship status, has the right to attend free public school up until the twelfth grade. With these educational opportunities, any child should be able to be successful. Nevertheless, there are tremendous gaps in educational achievement in the United States. And these gaps fall along racial and ethnic lines.

Historically, educational opportunities in this country have not been equal. Enslaved Africans and their children were forbidden to learn how to read or write. Chinese immigrants were banned from public schools. African American, Asian American, and Mexican American children were relegated to separate and unequal schools. Prior to 1954, U.S. laws prevented many non-white children from accessing the best educational opportunities.

Today, over six decades later, some things have changed. There are no longer any all-white universities in the United States, and the number of all-white high schools has decreased. The best colleges and universities now seek out a diverse student body, and many offer scholarships to students who can contribute to campus diversity. Elite private high schools offer similar incentives to attract students who are neither white nor from privileged backgrounds. Yet nonwhite children still do not have equal access to the opportunities available to their white counterparts.

In this chapter, we will look at the history and current state of educational inequality in the United States. We will see how far we have come and how far we must go to achieve equality in educational opportunities and outcomes for all children in the United States.

THE HISTORY OF EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

In the United States, the idea of equal opportunity holds great weight, even as the reality has fallen short of the ideal. Before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954, children who were not white were systematically prevented from attending white schools under a doctrine called “separate but equal.”

During slavery, many African Americans were prevented from learning to read and write, sometimes by law. Free blacks were not permitted to enroll in the few public schools that existed in southern states. With emancipation came the freedom to learn and to teach. African Americans across the South started schools wherever they could—in fields, in one-room schoolhouses, and in people’s homes. Southern blacks who managed to learn to read and write taught others in their community. They also recruited Northerners as teachers. By the end of the nineteenth century, states across the South were able to ensure free public schooling for all children (Span 2002).



▲ A teacher reads to his students at a segregated school in Uno, Virginia, in 1947.

Beginning in the early twentieth century, racial tensions heightened. African Americans lost the right to vote in several southern states. In this context, school segregation was implemented and enforced in both the North and the South. With segregation, black children were often left with few educational resources. Their communities often had to make do with one-room schoolhouses provided by the state, or else they had to pool their own funds to build better schools. Community-established schools provided some of the first educational opportunities to black children in the South, but they were gravely underresourced (Span 2002).

Official segregation in public schools persisted until 1954. Whereas many African American and Mexican children were obliged to attend segregated schools in their home communities, many Native American children were sent to Indian boarding schools. The history of segregated and

unequal schools in this country stretches over many decades and continues to have implications today.

Indian Schools

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, U.S. government officials enacted policies to ensure that Native Americans would leave behind their traditional ways and assimilate into American society. One of the measures aimed at obliterating native cultures was the creation of Indian schools, as these institutions were called in the early twentieth century.

The three main types of schools designed for Native Americans were (1) boarding schools located outside of reservations, (2) boarding schools located on reservations, and (3) day schools on reservations. In addition, starting in 1819, there were federally subsidized mission schools, which focused on teaching Native American children about Christianity. These schools were designed to assimilate Native Americans into mainstream society (Watras 2004).

The first boarding school was the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, established in 1879. The philosophy of the school's founder, Richard Henry Pratt, was that by fostering assimilation, the school could "kill the Indian and save the man." By 1926, about 70,000 of the 84,000 Native American children in the United States were attending a government-created school (Watras 2004). In 1930, there were 707 Indian schools across the United States, with 52 in Montana alone (Noel 2002).



◀ Tom Torlino, who was Navajo, as he entered the school in 1882 (left), and how he appeared three years later.

Some Native American children attended boarding schools by choice, often with the hope that they would be provided for materially and would learn skills that would help them survive in mainstream society. Many children, however, were forced or coerced to attend these schools (Noel 2002). Once there, students who tried to run away were often harshly punished. At Chemawa School in Oregon, for example, there were forty-six runaway attempts in 1921 and seventy in 1922. At this school, runaways, called deserters, were forced to stand in the hallway with their arms and legs tied. If they tumbled over because they fell asleep, the matron would whip them and make them stand again (Marr n.d.). At Haskell Indian School, there were fifty-three runaways in September 1910, and another thirty-five in October. If runaways were returned to the school, they would face physical punishment for their behavior (Stout 2012).

When children arrived at these schools, they were often renamed. A young man named Raining Bird, for example, was renamed Arthur Raining Bird. If the boys had long hair, it was cut. Native American children were forbidden from speaking in their native language and from practicing their own religions. Children who spoke in their native languages were often physically punished if the teacher overheard them. Native languages, dress, and hairstyles were forbidden in order to inculcate Native American children in the ways of white Americans (Noel 2002).

The children spent half of the day in classes learning English, reading, and mathematics, and the other half of the day doing industrial, agricultural, or domestic work, which were framed as “productive activities.” The girls were assigned to kitchen duties, sewing, laundry, ironing, and cleaning, while the boys were required to do farm labor, gardening, grounds keeping, and carpentry



> Students in cadet uniforms at the Carlisle Indian School, ca. 1880.

(Noel 2002). In some cases, once Native American girls learned how to keep house, they were sent to local white homes to work as servants (Trennert 1983).

Native American children who went to boarding schools were often underfed at the schools, and many became ill or died. In 1926, a comprehensive study of Indian schools showed that the boarding schools' budget for feeding children was only eleven cents a day—\$1.41 a day in today's currency, and not nearly enough to provide a reasonable diet. Because of undernourishment, the children often succumbed to diseases such as tuberculosis (Watras 2004). Many boarding schools across the United States today have burial grounds for Native American children who died while at school.

Following the official end of assimilation programs in 1993, these boarding schools were either reformed or closed. The repercussions of these institutions, however, continue to be felt. Genevieve Williams, who was born in 1922, went to an Indian school as a young girl. She remembers being forced to scrub floors on her hands and knees and being beaten for speaking in her native language. She recalls girls being flogged for wetting the bed. When she returned home at age fourteen, she no longer recognized her mother. Having never bonded with her own mother, Williams found it hard to nurture her own children. Her husband had been physically abused at school, and this also affected his ability to raise their children (King 2008). The effects of Indian schools are felt across generations as the children of Native Americans like Genevieve Williams and her husband continue to suffer from this intergenerational trauma.

Segregation and Landmark Court Cases

Prior to 1885, Chinese American students were not allowed to attend public schools in California. Between 1896 and 1954, it was legal for states to deny African Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans access to public schools and other facilities designated for whites (Wollenberg 1974). The 1896 court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (as discussed in Chapter Three) was used to justify the existence of separate educational facilities for white and nonwhite students. By 1931, more than three-quarters of the school districts in California practiced segregation (Wollenberg 1974). At that same time, 90 percent of the schools in Texas were racially and ethnically segregated (Godfrey 2008).

The schools established for nonwhites were inferior in many ways to those that served whites. Schools for Mexican American children were designed to "Americanize" them through instruction in cooking, hygiene, English, and civics. In these segregated schools, children were punished for speaking Spanish, and girls were taught home economics so that they could work in the homes of whites (Wollenberg 1974).

In the 1930s and 1940s, Mexican Americans in Texas and California initiated protests against these separate and inferior schools. In Texas, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), founded in 1929, led the protests. The first case brought by LULAC was *Salvatierra v. Del Rio Independent School District*, in 1930. The court decided that segregation was permissible, reasoning that it was not based on race but on language and academic abilities. Over the next two decades, advocates of educational equality in Texas continued to be unsuccessful through a series of similar court cases.

One of the first victories of the civil rights movement came in 1947 with the case of *Mendez v. Westminster*, when a federal circuit court in California ruled that the segregation of children of Mexican and Latin American descent was unconstitutional. The *Mendez* case was a critical forerunner to the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which overturned the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling. *Mendez* began when Gonzalo Méndez, a Mexican American naturalized U.S. citizen, and his Puerto Rican wife, Felicitas, attempted to enroll their three children in the 17th Street Elementary School in Orange County, California. Although Gonzalo Méndez had attended the school himself as a boy, his children were turned away because the school no longer allowed Mexican Americans to attend. Following failed attempts to win over the school board, he and 5,000 other people filed suit against several Orange County school districts in 1945. Their court case was successful, and the Supreme Court ruled that segregation based on a Spanish surname was unconstitutional (Ruiz 2001).

For African Americans, the landmark case regarding educational segregation was *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which was a compilation of four

separate cases from four different towns. It involved two rural communities—Clarendon County, South Carolina, and Prince Edward County, Virginia—and two urban districts—Topeka, Kansas, and Wilmington, Delaware. African Americans in each of these communities perceived that the education their children received in segregated schools was inferior to that given to white children. Indeed, local governments spent less money on the education of black children. Nationally, prior to 1950, the average expenditure for black students was less than two-thirds of that for white students (Siddle Walker 2000). In 1951, in Clarendon County, for example, the annual average expenditure was \$44.32 per black student, compared with an average of \$166.45 per white student. Additionally, white children did



▲ Mexican American students reading in a segregated classroom, 1942.

not have to pay for their school materials, whereas black students did (Anderson and Byrne 2004). These unequal expenditures meant that African Americans had access to fewer educational resources (Siddle Walker 2000). Parents in Clarendon County got together to protest this tremendous inequality, and their case became one of the four cases heard in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Despite tremendous obstacles, African Americans in the pre-civil rights era worked hard to ensure that their children had educational opportunities. Parents often provided equipment and spaces when they could. Communities mobilized to ensure educational opportunities. At exemplary high schools such as Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C., 60 percent of graduates went on to attend college in the 1950s. At this same high school, several of the teachers had doctorates from elite institutions (Siddle Walker 2000).

The rulings in *Mendez v. Westminster* and *Brown v. Board of Education* were only the beginning of the long process of school desegregation. In Prince Edward County, Virginia, for example, the *Brown* decision led to the closing of all public schools so that white students would not have to integrate. In 1964, a Supreme Court decision—*Griffin v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*—forced the county to reopen public schools (Orfield and Lee 2004).

The Persistence of Racial Segregation in the Educational System

Educational institutions are no longer allowed to prevent nonwhite children from attending. Nevertheless, segregation persists, in part because school districts are not required to promote integration. In the 1970s, courts often ordered schools that continued to be racially segregated to bus children in from across town. This strategy worked because even though neighborhoods were segregated, busing meant that schools did not have to be. However, busing was short-lived (McNeal 2009). In 1991, the Supreme Court decided in *Dowell v. Oklahoma City* that schools were not obliged to desegregate. This decision meant that many school districts abandoned desegregation programs. Once children began to attend schools in the neighborhoods where they lived (as opposed to being bused to other neighborhoods), schools rapidly became resegregated (see Figure 8-1).

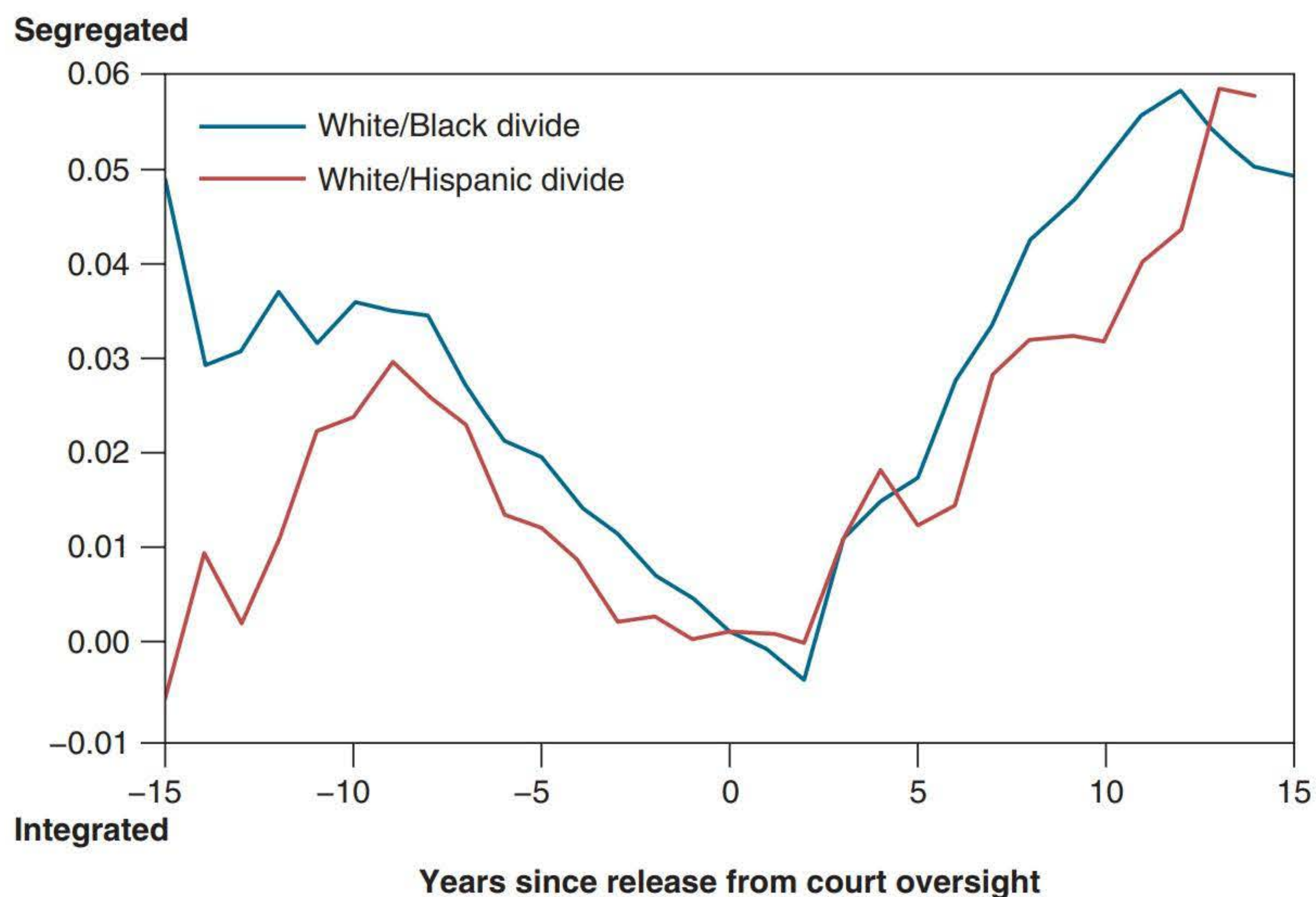
Although 1988 was a high point of desegregation for black students, the *Dowell* decision reversed that trend. Since 1991, we have seen increasingly high rates of segregation, as measured by the percentage of schools that are over 90 percent nonwhite—nearly one in five by 2013. At the same time, the larger numbers of nonwhite students overall in the U.S. educational system means that progressively fewer schools have less than 10 percent nonwhite students (Orfield, Ee, Frankenberg, and Siegel-Hawley 2016). These trends are shown in Figure 8-1.

This high level of racial segregation is often associated with poverty: in 2011, half of schools that were over 90 percent black and Latino also had poverty

FIGURE 8-1.
**The Return of Segregation
after 1991–2009 Release
from Court Oversight.**

Stanford researchers used a “dissimilarity index” to measure segregation, from 0 (balanced integration) to 1 (complete segregation).

Source: PBS Frontline (2014)/
Stanford Center for Education
Policy Analysis (2012).



rates over 90 percent (Orfield and Frankenberg 2014; Table 8-1). In contrast, 69 percent of schools with less than 10 percent black and Latino students had poverty rates of less than 50 percent. There is a direct relationship between the percentage of black and Latino students in a school and the percentage of poor students (Orfield and Frankenberg 2014). A recent study of Florida schools found that more than 80 percent of students in primarily black schools were impoverished, compared with 50 percent of students in integrated schools and 43 percent of students in primarily white schools. This study also found that only 32 percent of fifth-graders at the primarily black schools had passed a basic test, compared with about 55 percent of those at the primarily white and integrated schools. Students at schools that were over 90 percent black fared the worst on standardized tests (Borman et al. 2004).

Affirmative Action in Higher Education

Racial diversity in schools is a contentious issue at the university level as well. Title VI of the 1968 Civil Rights Act enabled colleges and universities to take **affirmative action** to enhance racial diversity on campus. Affirmative action encompasses policies and procedures designed to combat ongoing discrimination in schools and in the workplace. In higher education, it has meant giving preferential treatment to people who are members of historically disadvantaged groups. In schools with affirmative action programs, admissions committees can consider the racial diversity of applicants as one factor in their decision to admit a student to a university.

affirmative action Policies and procedures designed to combat ongoing discrimination in schools and the workplace.

TABLE 8-1
Relationship between Segregation and Poverty, 2011–2012

% Poor in Schools	Percent Black and Latino Students in Schools									
	0–10	11–20	21–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	61–70	71–80	81–90	91–100
0–10	11.4	10.0	3.6	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.9	2.1	2.2
11–20	11.8	16.2	11.3	4.2	2.8	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.3
21–30	13.4	14.7	14.4	10.1	5.2	3.7	2.5	2.2	1.7	1.5
31–40	16.1	15.0	15.2	14.8	10.7	7.2	4.8	2.7	2.2	1.8
41–50	16.3	14.3	15.5	16.5	15.1	12.7	8.6	4.9	3.0	2.4
51–60	13.4	12.7	14.9	17.1	16.7	16.9	13.4	8.0	4.6	3.5
61–71	9.0	9.3	12.5	15.7	19.1	17.8	18.5	15.5	9.2	5.4
71–80	4.7	4.7	7.7	11.3	16.0	18.8	20.8	22.0	18.3	10.5
81–90	2.0	1.9	3.4	5.7	8.7	13.2	17.5	23.2	29.3	20.6
91–100	1.9	1.2	1.5	2.6	3.4	5.6	10.0	17.0	28.0	50.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
% U.S. schools	33.2	13.9	9.0	6.9	5.9	4.9	4.4	4.2	5.0	12.7

Source: Adapted from Orfield and Frankenberg (2014).

In 1965, only 2 percent of medical students in the country were African American. In response to this underrepresentation, the University of California at Davis Medical School set aside sixteen of its one hundred admission slots for underrepresented minority students. In 1978, a white applicant named Allan Bakke was denied admission to the medical school. Bakke believed that in the absence of these racial quotas, he would have been admitted. He therefore filed a class-action lawsuit alleging that UC Davis had discriminated against him based on his race. In the *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978) case, the Supreme Court ruled that the preferential racial quotas did deny equal protection to white students and thus were unconstitutional. However, the Supreme Court also ruled that race could still be used as one factor in determining admission. With this ruling, racial quotas were no longer permissible, but diversity could continue to be used as a factor in determining admission. The *Bakke* decision thus ended the relatively short history of racial quotas in university admissions, leaving us today with more ambiguous options for promoting diversity. The University of California system, for example, can argue that a student or job candidate would contribute to the diversity of the campus, but it cannot say that it did or did not offer a position because of racial or ethnic identity (Yosso, Parker, Solorzano, and Lynn 2004).

After the *Bakke* decision, affirmative action programs continued to come under attack across the United States. In 1996, California voters passed Proposition



▲ Demonstrators in support of affirmative action in schools gather outside the U.S. Supreme Court in 2015.

209, which banned the consideration of race in higher education admissions. Consequently, admission rates of black, Latino, and Native American students to the University of California system fell dramatically. Between 1997 and 1998—the year the ban took effect—admissions of underrepresented students fell 61 percent at UC Berkeley and 36 percent at UCLA. These disparities continue today: black, Latino, and Native American students made up 54 percent of all California high school graduates in 2012 but just 27 percent of all UC freshmen in that same year (Murphy 2013).

In June 2016, in *Fisher v. The University of Texas*, the Supreme Court reaffirmed that the University of Texas has the right to take racial status into consideration in university admissions. This factor is one of many considered, including grades, test scores, extracurricular activities, hardship, and other personal characteristics. The case came to the Supreme Court after applicant Abigail Fisher, who is white, filed a lawsuit alleging that her denial of admission to the University of Texas was due to her race. Fisher was not in the top 10 percent of her high school graduating class, and she thus was not able to enroll at the University of Texas through the program that guarantees admission to top students in Texas. Instead, she was competing for a relatively small pool of spots for students not in the top 10 percent. University officials argued that, with an SAT score of 1180 and a 3.59 GPA, Fisher's record simply did not qualify her for admission. The Supreme Court agreed that Fisher had not faced discrimination based on her whiteness (Hannah-Jones 2016).

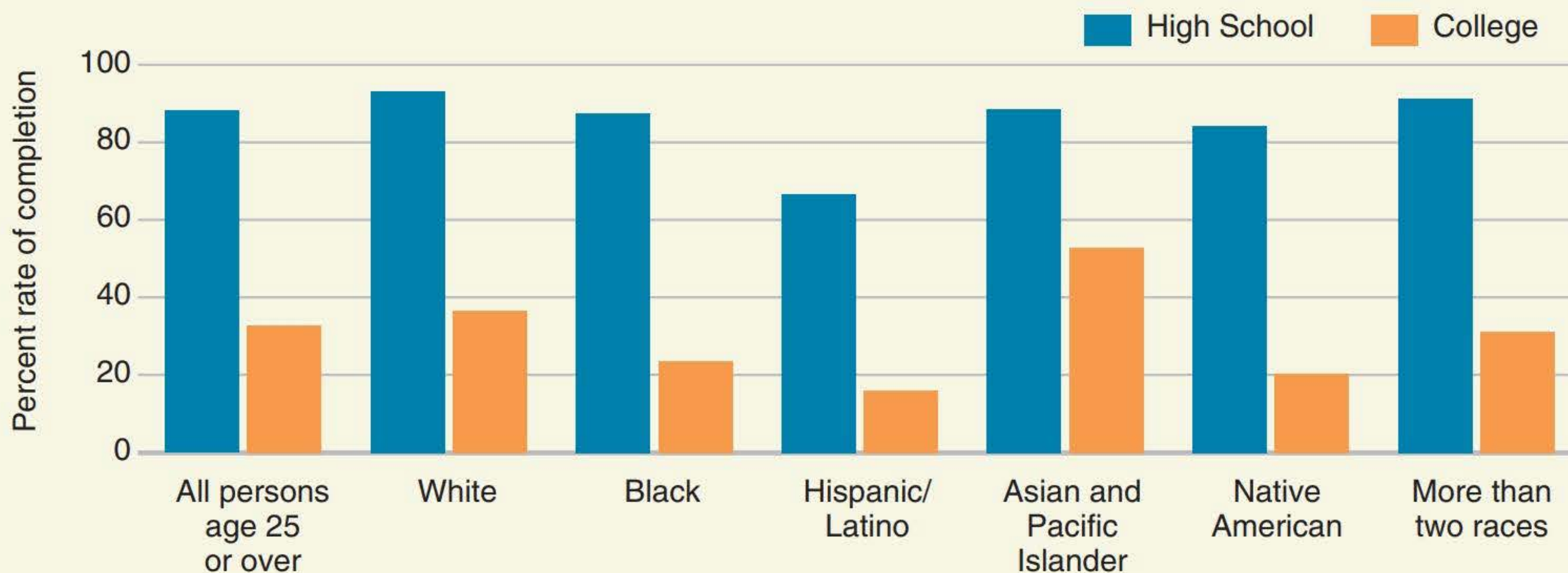
EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY TODAY

At all levels of schooling, educational achievements in the United States vary by racial or ethnic group, affecting earning potential (At a Glance 8.1). In 2015, 88.4 percent of people in the United States had completed high school. However, only two-thirds of Hispanics had completed high school, as compared with 93.3 percent of whites (National Center for Education National Center for Education 2016). In 2015, over half of Asians had a bachelor's degree or higher—well above the national average of 32.5 percent. In contrast, only 19.8 percent of Native Americans, 15.5 percent of Hispanics, and 22.9 percent

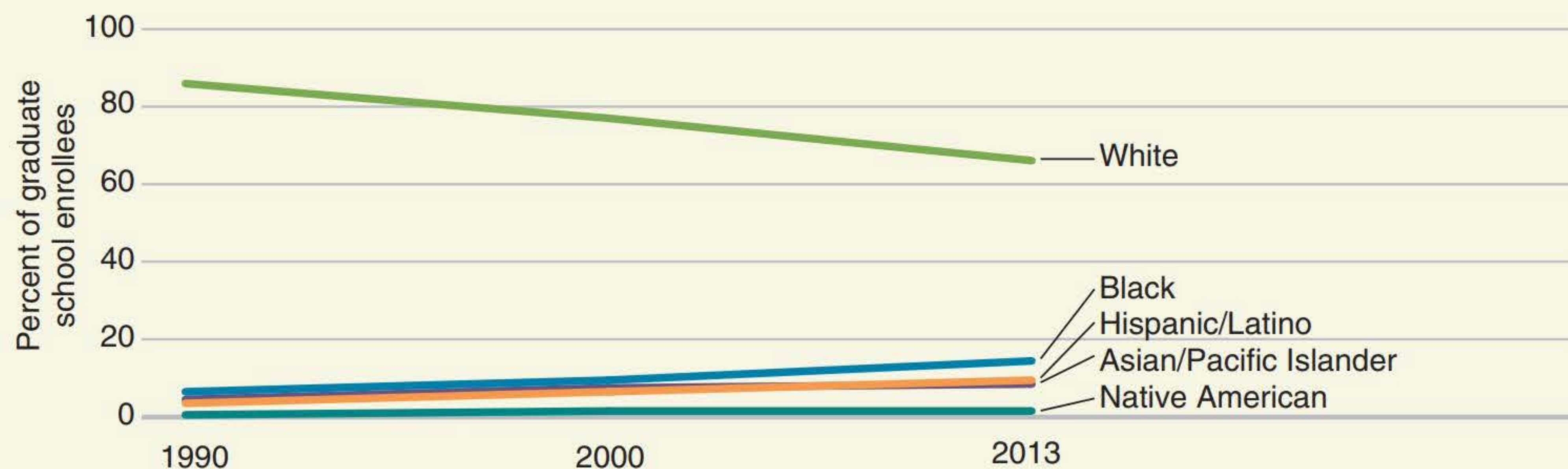
AT A GLANCE 8.1 Educational Disparities by Race and Life Course Effects

High School Nine out of ten Americans had completed high school, yet Latinos lagged behind: Fewer than seven out of ten had a high school diploma.

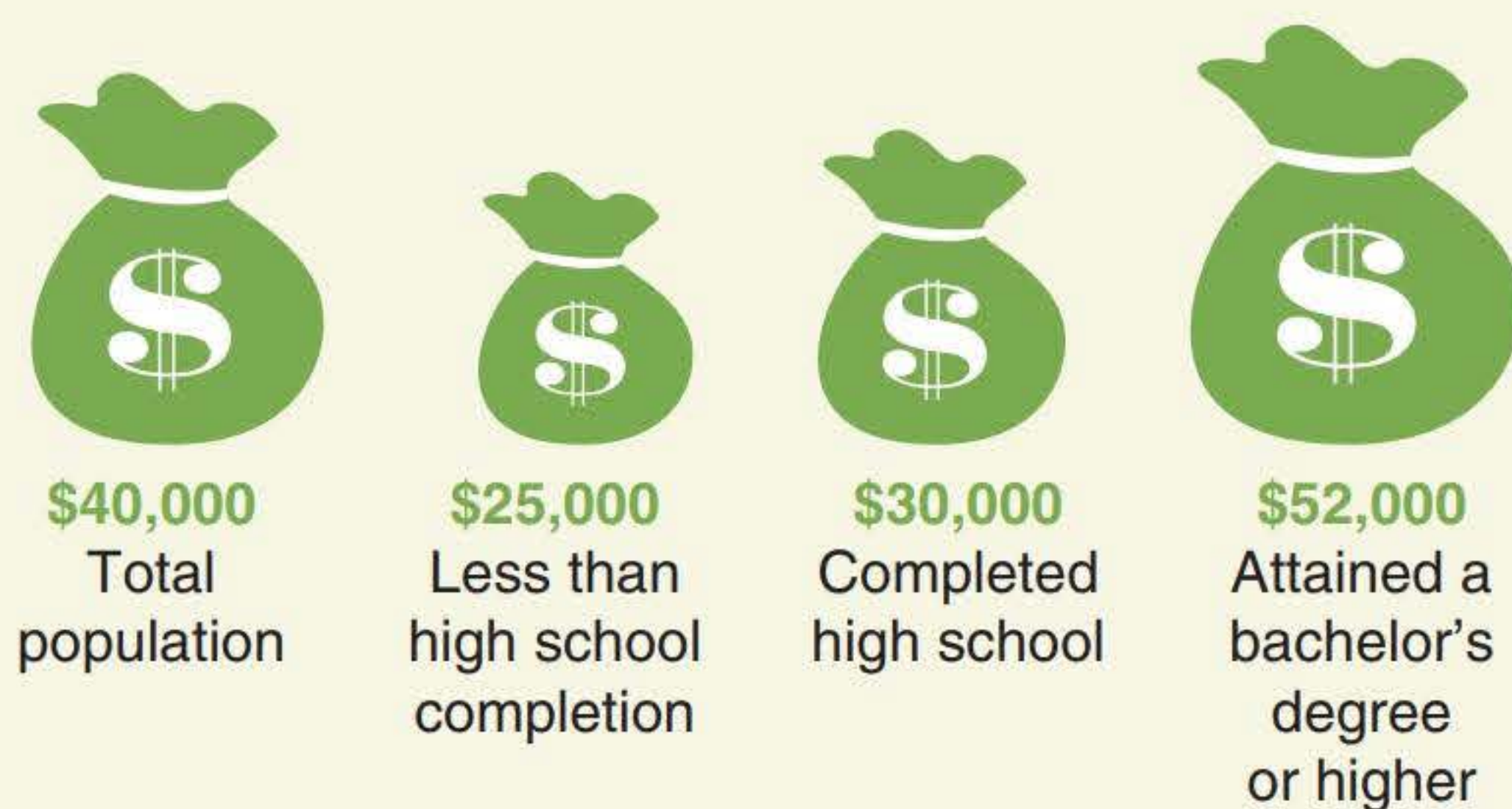
College Over half of Asian Americans had a bachelor's degree in 2015, compared with only 15.5% of Latinos.



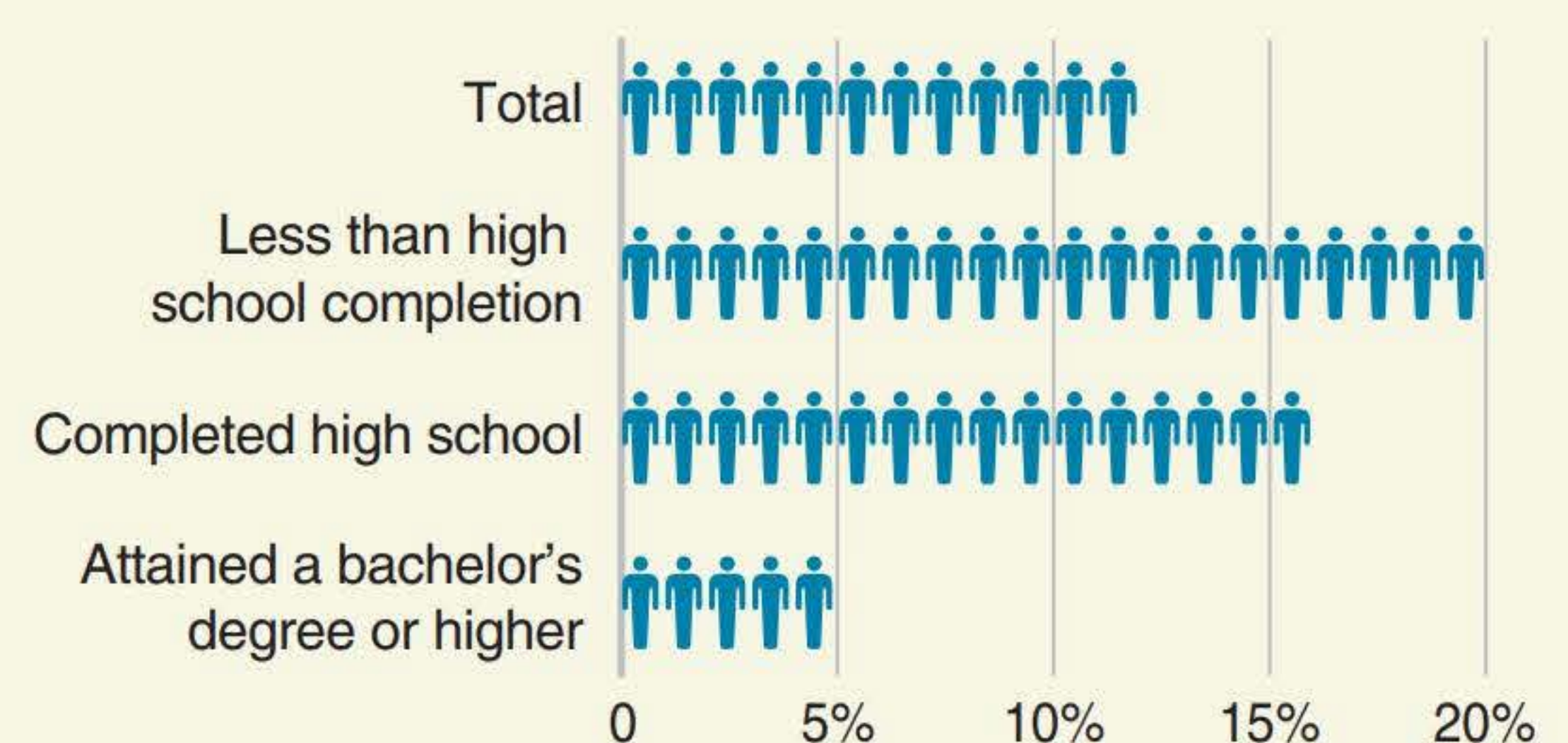
Graduate School The percentage of graduate students of color is increasing, in spite of disparities at the high school and college levels. In 1990, whites made up 86% of students in graduate school. By 2013, the percentage of whites had dropped to 66% as the percentages of nonwhites increased across the board.



Median annual earnings for 25- to 34-year-olds, 2014



Unemployment rates of 20- to 24-year-olds, 2014



All data from NCES 2016

of blacks had a bachelor's degree. The data are similar if we look at professional degrees, though as shown in At a Glance 8.1, the percentage of graduate students of color is increasing (National Center for Education Statistics 2016).

Although disparities in educational outcomes persist, it is undeniable that they have lessened over the course of the past hundred years in the United States. Legal segregation has been banished, Native American children are no longer forced to attend boarding schools, standard curricula now include multicultural components, nearly all youth have achieved literacy, and high school graduation rates for all racial groups are converging. Between 1971 and 1996, the gap in reading test scores between blacks and whites shrank by almost one-half (Kao and Thompson 2003). There are still some significant disparities among racial groups, but they are not as pronounced as they were at the beginning of the twenty-first century, when 28 percent of Hispanic/Latino youth dropped out of high school, compared with only 12 percent in 2014 (Fry and Taylor 2013; Krogstad 2016).

In aggregate data, it becomes apparent that Asian students are outperforming all other students in test scores and high school and college completion rates. These achievements have led to a **“model minority” myth**, according to which Asians are widely perceived as the racial minority group that has succeeded in the United States. As we saw earlier, Asians have not always been viewed as a model minority. In fact, as already noted, they were prevented from attending public schools in California in the late nineteenth century. The current stereotype did not become prevalent until the late twentieth century (Wing 2007). And today, even though Asians perform better on average than other groups, it is not the case that every single Asian student is an overachiever. Additionally, when we break the Asian population down into groups by national origin, we can see a more complex story (Ngo and Lee 2007). For example, only about 14 percent of Hmong, Laotian, or Cambodian adults in the United States have college degrees, compared with about half of all Chinese, Filipino, and Pakistani adults. Indian adults have the highest rate of college graduation, at 70 percent (Piccorossi 2012).

There continue to be disparities in college attendance and completion, although these disparities have changed over the years. In 2012, Asians were the most likely racial or ethnic group to attend college, with 84 percent of Asian recent high school graduates enrolled in college. Of these students, 79 percent were enrolled at a four-year college or university, and 91 percent were enrolled full time (Fry and Taylor 2013). In 2012, 69 percent of Latino high school graduates enrolled in college, compared with 67 percent of white high school graduates, 84 percent of Asians high school graduates, and 63 percent of black high school graduates. Latinos, however, were less likely to attend a four-year college than white students. In 2012, 56 percent of Latino college students were at a four-year college, compared with 72 percent of white students. In addition,

“model minority” myth

The stereotype that Asians are the racial minority group that has succeeded in the United States.

Latinos were less likely than whites to attend a selective college, to be enrolled in college full time, and to complete a four-year degree (Fry and Taylor 2013).

Educational disparities among racial and ethnic groups are evident at each level of the educational system. In the next section, we will explore these disparities in more detail and look at the various explanations sociologists offer for them. Before we proceed with sociological explanations, pause to think about why black, Latino, and Native American students are faring less well than white and Asian students in the educational system. What have we learned so far that might inform your explanations?

research focus

Native American/Alaska Native College Student Retention

American Indian and Alaska Native students are among the least likely to enroll in college and to complete college once enrolled. Only about a third of American Indian and Alaska Native students who enroll in college graduate within six years, compared with over half of students from the general population. These facts compelled Raphael Guillory (2009) to design a study to better understand the obstacles American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students face in terms of college enrollment, retention, and completion.



Each summer since 2005, UC Riverside has hosted The Gathering of the Tribes, an annual program designed to encourage Native Americans to go to college.

(continued)

Guillory examined enrollment and retention rates of AI/AN students at three universities: Washington State University, University of Idaho, and Montana State University. He conducted focus group interviews with thirty AI/AN students at these institutions, in addition to interviews with faculty members and administrators.

The AI/AN students contended that their primary motivation for staying in university was their desire to give back to their community and their family. They spoke about the importance of being a role model for their younger family members, making their parents and other family members proud, and being able to give back to their community once they graduated.

The students cited social support on campus, including Native American and multicultural centers, as critical to their persistence. It was important for the students to be around other AI/AN students, particularly for those who came from reservations and were accustomed to being in primarily AI/AN communities.

Guillory suggests the following three strategies to help retain AI/AN students:

1. Maintain connections to family and tribal communities.
2. Address single-parent students and students with family issues.
3. Provide academic assistance through peer mentoring.

For Discussion

1. What can we learn from the history and particularity of the American Indian experience that might help develop effective strategies to enhance their educational opportunities?
2. How might these strategies be useful when applied to other groups?

Source: Guillory 2009.

THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP: SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS FOR PERSISTENT INEQUALITY

What explains persistent disparities in educational outcomes by race and ethnicity? Sociologists describe the disparate educational outcomes of whites, Asians, blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans as the **achievement gap**. A variety of sociological explanations have been offered for this gap, and we will explore a few of these in this section.

The first observation to make when discussing educational disparities is that public education in the United States depends heavily on local property taxes. Inequalities in housing values translate into inequalities in schools.

achievement gap

The disparate educational outcomes of whites, Asians, blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans.

Affirmative Action in Brazil

In Brazil, nearly half the population is of African descent, yet this group is underrepresented in positions of political and economic power. In 2003, only 2 percent of the deputies in the national congress identified themselves as black. Black Brazilians make up 70 percent of the poorest decile (tenth of the population) in Brazil and only 15 percent of the richest decile (Htun 2004). And in 2000, only 2 percent of university graduates were black (Lloyd 2004). A more recent study shows that, despite reforms, white Brazilians continue to have an average of two more years of schooling than black Brazilians (Telles, Flores, and Urrea-Giraldo 2015).

The Brazilian constitution has long included provisions that prevent discrimination. However, these provisions have not been enough to overcome racial inequality. In response to public pressure, beginning in the early twenty-first century, the Brazilian government turned to affirmative action (Htun 2004).

Today in Brazil, federal law requires all federal universities to implement affirmative action policies. Federal universities in Brazil are among the best institutions of higher education in the country and are free of charge. Paradoxically, the students most likely to gain admission to these free public universities are those who attend expensive, elite secondary schools. Wealthy families, which are disproportionately white, have historically expended large amounts of money on private secondary schools to ensure that their children gain admission to the public universities (Telles and Paixão 2013).

In consequence, it has historically been difficult for nonwhite students to gain admission to these schools. Brazilian university admission is based primarily on students' scores on an exam. However, public secondary schools often seldom provide students with adequate preparation to attain sufficiently high scores on the exam. This disparity in scores between public and private school students led to an overrepresentation of wealthy and white students in Brazilian universities.

In October 2003, the state of Rio de Janeiro announced that 40 percent of admission slots for its state universities would be reserved for black and brown students. Soon afterward, the state of Minas Gerais set aside 50 percent of its slots for students from public secondary schools (Telles 2004). In subsequent years, other public universities added their own versions of affirmative action policies, giving preference to students based on characteristics such as public high school attendance; family income; or being black, indigenous, or brown (Telles and Paixão 2013). In 2012, then-President Dilma Rousseff signed the "Law of Social Quotas," which required all public universities to reserve half of their admission spots for students who had attended public high schools. The intention of the law was to increase racial diversity by using public school attendance as a proxy. Rousseff indicated that the goal of the law was to increase the number of African-descended students in public universities from 8,700 to 56,000 over the next ten years (Glickhouse 2012).

Parental Socioeconomic Status

In the United States, parental education, income, and wealth are not distributed evenly. A major factor that can help us understand racial and ethnic inequality in education is overall socioeconomic inequality. For example, one study tracked the college completion rates of youth who were sophomores in high school in 1980. Over half of the youth whose family incomes were in

the top 25 percent had earned a college degree by 1992, compared with only 7 percent of those whose family incomes were in the lowest 25 percent. The chances of college completion for the higher-income group were thus seven times higher than the chances for the lower-income group. Overall, differences in family income can explain about one-third of the test score gap between blacks and whites and nearly all of the differences in college completion rates (Gamoran 2001).

In addition to family income, parental education matters. Children with parents who have college degrees, for example, are much more likely to attend college than children whose parents have not completed high school. Parental education is one factor that explains Asians' relatively high educational attainment. In 1990, 65 percent of immigrants from India had college degrees, as did 63 percent of immigrants from Taiwan. However, it is important to recognize the variety in the Asian American experience: less than 5 percent of Cambodian and Laotian immigrants had a college degree in 1990 (Kao and Thompson 2003). The reason for these differences is related to immigration policy: most Taiwanese and Indian immigrants came on skill-based visas, which required high levels of education, whereas most Cambodians and Laotians came as refugees.

Children from working-class backgrounds tend to fare less well in school than children from middle-class or wealthy families. In 2013, these differences in test scores persisted, both by socioeconomic status and by race/ethnicity (Kena et al. 2016; Figures 8-2 and 8-3). The fact that African Americans and Latinos are, on average, less wealthy than white students helps explain some

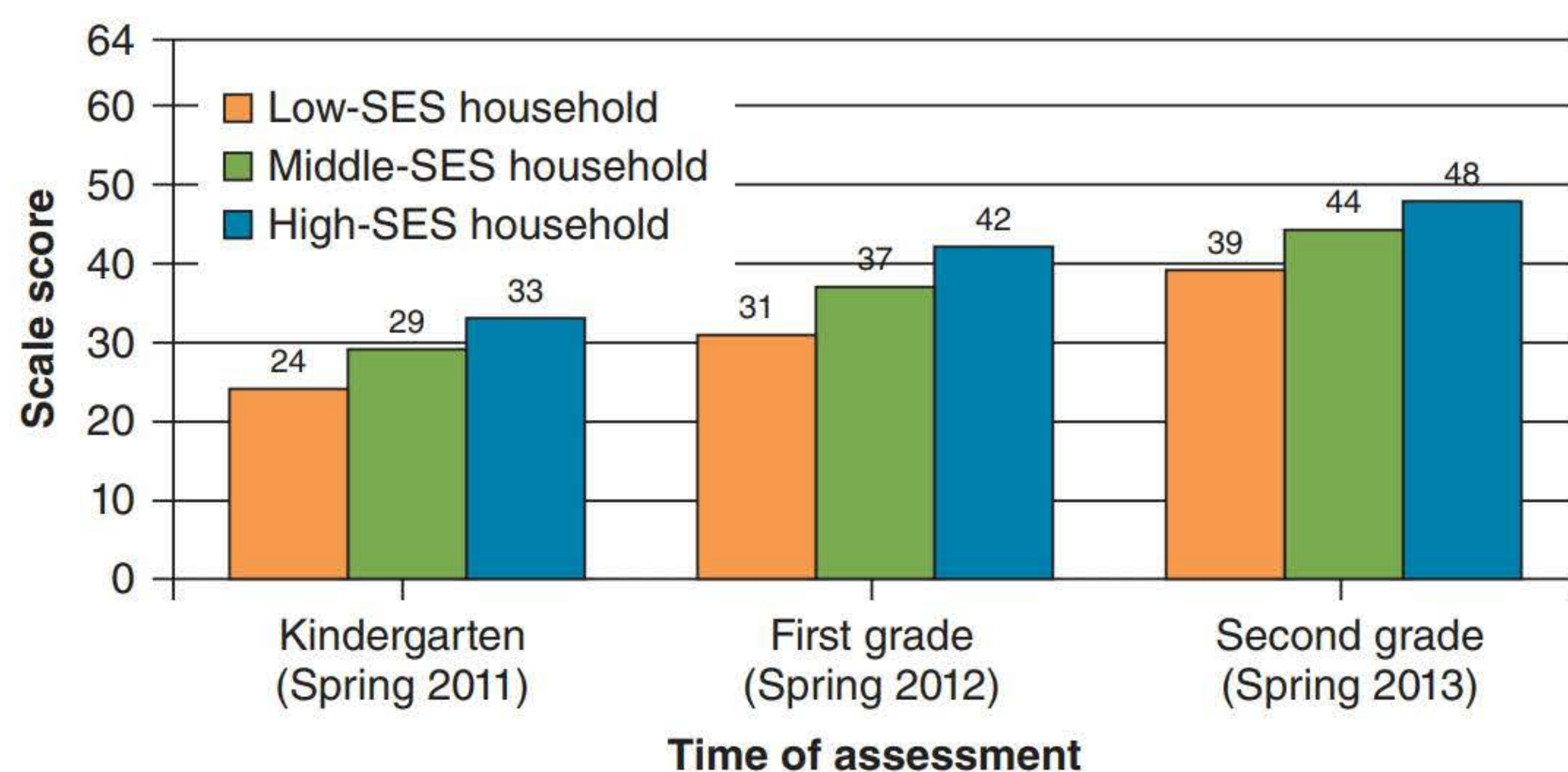


FIGURE 8-2.

Average science scale scores of kindergarteners, first graders, and second graders by family socioeconomic status (SES), 2011–2013

Source: Kena et al. (2016).

of the inequalities in educational outcomes. In one study, sociologists Vincent Roscigno and James Ainsworth-Darnell (1999) found that family socioeconomic status could explain about half of the difference between the test scores of black and white children. What explains the other half? Why do black and Latino children fare less well in school than white children who have the same family structure and income levels? Sociologists offer a few explanations, which we will consider next.

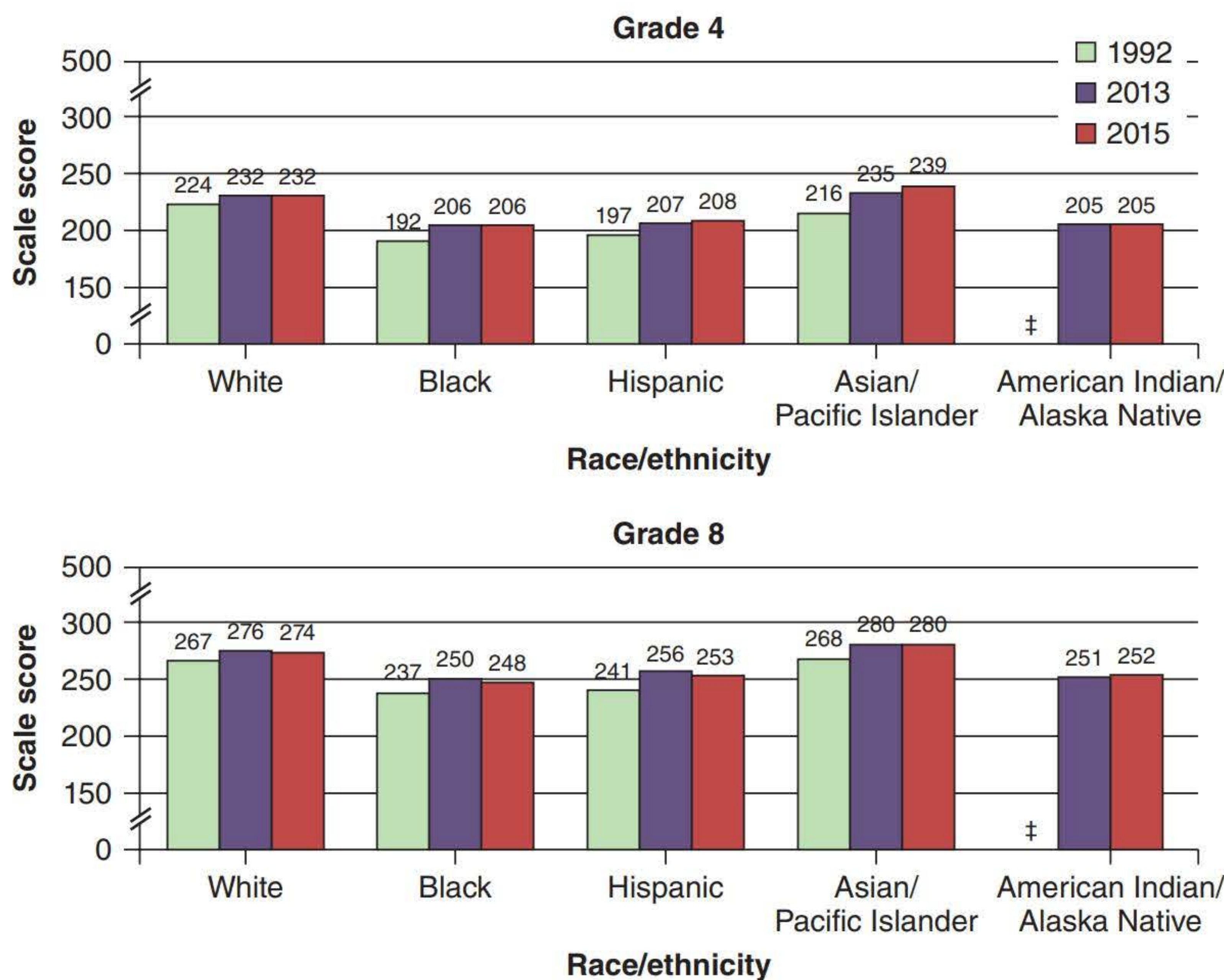


FIGURE 8-3.
Average National Assessment
of Educational Progress
(NAEP) reading scale scores
of fourth- and eighth-grade
students, by race/ethnicity:
1992, 2003, 2015

Source: Kena et al. (2016).

Cultural Explanations: “Acting White” and Other Theories

Sociologists and other social scientists have long conducted research on the extent to which culture plays a role in the achievement gap. Culture is a broad analytic concept and can refer to a wide variety of factors, often revealing disconnects among students, parents, and teachers.

Scholars of education have spent much ink trying to understand why black students perform more poorly in school and have lower test scores than white students. One explanation that gained currency in the 1980s and 1990s is the **oppositional culture** thesis. Anthropologists Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu (1986) are credited with coming up with this thesis, which has two basic components: (1) African American children don’t do well in school because they equate school success with “**acting white**,” and (2) African American children have responded to widespread discrimination by developing an identity in opposition to dominant white culture, and thus in opposition to school success. The basis of this argument is that black children receive signals from both the white and black communities that lead them to reject schooling as a route to success. Fordham and Ogbu contend that the experiences of black students and their parents with discrimination cause them to distrust white authority figures and institutions. Additionally, they argue that black students

oppositional culture Fordham and Ogbu’s (1986) thesis that black children receive signals from both the white and black communities that lead them to reject schooling as a route to success.

acting white A term used to refer to nonwhites who are perceived as behaving in ways associated with white people.

develop anti-achievement attitudes to avoid peer sanctions. They found that black students equate “working hard to get good grades in school” (186) with acting white. Fordham and Ogbu’s thesis is based on a study with only thirty-three students, and it gained an inordinate amount of media attention.

The idea that black students do not do well in school because they have antischool attitudes was widely accepted and publicized because it resonated with the popular belief that black people do not value education. However, a series of subsequent studies have shown that it is simply not true that black students consciously underachieve or equate academic success with acting white. For example, using a nationally representative sample of nearly 17,000 students, James Ainsworth-Darnell and Douglas Downey (1998) found that black students had more positive attitudes toward school than white students. They also found that black students reported being more popular when they did better in school, refuting the claim that black students experience peer pressure to reject school. They did not find support for the claim that black students perceive lower returns from education than white students; instead, black students were more likely than white students to agree with the statement that education is important to getting a job.

In a qualitative study of seventy-two black students from the southeastern part of the United States, Karolyn Tyson (2002) found that black third- and fourth-graders were consistently very excited about school and about learning. In her study, students were proud when they excelled and disappointed when they got answers wrong or were not allowed to participate in classroom activities. Instead of experiencing high achievement as a burden, as Fordham and Ogbu (1986) have argued, Tyson (2002, 1174) found that black youth experienced a “burden of low achievement,” in which they felt emotional distress when they did not do well.



▲ Why are schools often internally segregated?

Tracking

Even when schools are supposedly integrated, there is often internal segregation. In her well-known book titled *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* (2003), Beverly Daniel Tatum provides many answers to this question. One response is that schools are internally segregated, with white students being the most likely to be in the more advanced classes. When children are in different classes, it is not surprising that they do not spend time together during social hours.

From elementary to high school, students in U.S. schools are placed in different classes based on ability groups, or “tracks.” Many studies have found that nonwhite children are more likely to be placed in low-ability groups, beginning in elementary school, whereas white children are more likely to be placed in college-bound tracks in high school. Kao and Thompson (2003) discuss data from 1997 which reveals that nearly half of whites and Asians were in college preparatory tracks, compared with about a third of Latino and Asian students and less than a quarter of Native American students. Another study, based on

1998 data, found that white students were twice as likely to be in advanced mathematics courses as blacks were. This study, however, found that the differences could be explained by accounting for test scores, grades, prior track placement, and socioeconomic status (Kelly 2009). A more recent nationally representative study found that African Americans and Latinos were under-represented in advanced sophomore math classes in a large number of schools. Moreover, black and Latino students at those schools had lower average GPAs and rates of university enrollment (Muller et al. 2010).

In addition to within-school differences, there are also disparities between schools. Schools that are predominantly white are more likely to have advanced placement (AP) classes than primarily black and Latino schools. The different opportunities that black, Latino, and Native American students have to take advanced classes have important impacts on their overall academic achievement and college success rates (Kao and Thompson 2003).

Social and Cultural Capital and Schooling

Sociologists of education also often turn to social and cultural capital as explanations for the achievement gap. **Social capital** refers to relationships and networks, whereas **cultural capital** describes available cultural resources. Put simply, social capital is *who* you know, whereas cultural capital is *what* you know. Students who know many people who have had educational success—parents, uncles, aunts, and cousins with college degrees—will have more



▲ Schools that are predominantly white are more likely to have advanced placement (AP) classes than primarily black and Latino schools.

social capital Relationships and networks that offer social and other benefits.

cultural capital Cultural resources that offer social and other benefits.

information and resources at their disposal than students whose social networks primarily include high school dropouts or people with no schooling at all. This social capital will play a role in a student's ability to succeed. In a similar fashion, students with access to dominant cultural capital—the norms, values, and cultural knowledge of the school—will have more chances for success than students whose families are not part of the dominant culture.

Based on their research with Mexican-origin students in the Bay Area, sociologists Ricardo Stanton-Salazar and Sanford M. Dornbusch (1995) argue that to be successful in school, adolescents require supportive ties with institutional agents. An **institutional agent** is a person who occupies a position of power and is able to access or negotiate resources for students. These institutional agents can be family or community members as well as school personnel. An institutional agent can be a high school counselor who helps a student obtain financial aid, an alumnus of a local college who serves as a mentor to a student and helps him or her fill out college applications, or a high school teacher who writes a college recommendation for a student. These institutional agents constitute a form of social capital that permits students to reach their educational goals. Working-class youth have less of this necessary form of social capital, which makes reaching their educational goals more difficult.

Most schools in the United States make some effort to recognize the multicultural nature of the nation. Nevertheless, people whose culture and experiences are part of the dominant culture are in charge of most schools. Children whose families are part of the dominant culture thus have an inherent advantage, as they do not have to learn the codes and norms of the dominant culture to be successful in school. Moreover, the school does not devalue their experiences and culture.

The concept of cultural capital draws from the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984), who argued that the dominant group in a society makes its preferences, tastes, and norms appear to be superior to those of the nondominant group. He describes the power of the dominant group to do this as **symbolic violence**, as the dominant group creates a context in which the norms, values, and tastes of other groups are labeled as inferior. An example of this symbolic violence in the United States is the idea that the standard form of English spoken by middle-class white Americans is an indication of intelligence and eloquence, whereas the forms of English that working-class African Americans speak to one another is an indication of ignorance. The dominant group—middle-class whites—sets the standards.

What all this means for education is that children who grow up in homes where Standard English is spoken can speak this language in school and

institutional agent A person who occupies a position of power and is able to access or negotiate resources for others.

symbolic violence As described by Pierre Bourdieu (1984), the power of a socially dominant group to make its preferences, tastes, and norms appear to be superior to those of the nondominant group.

receive praise for their intelligence and eloquence. Meanwhile, children raised in homes where other forms of English or other languages are spoken must learn new languages and accents in school, and their teachers may tell them not to speak the way their parents do at home. The act of telling children that the way their parents speak is inferior and unacceptable in a school environment can amount to symbolic violence.

Scholars such as Michèle Lamont and Annette Lareau (1988, 164) define cultural capital as “widely shared, legitimate culture made up of high-status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, behaviors, and goods) used in direct or indirect social and cultural exclusion.” Other scholars, however, contend that all people have cultural capital, not solely those who belong to the dominant group. Sociologist Prudence Carter (2003) explains that nondominant cultural capital refers to those cultural resources and tastes that people who do not belong to the dominant group use to gain authenticity as a member of their group. For example, African American youth may use nondominant cultural capital such as knowledge of the latest underground hip-hop music to signify their cultural authenticity. In this way, nondominant cultural capital also has an instrumental use—even though that use may not benefit the youth very much in terms of dominant society.

In a 2003 study, Prudence Carter interviewed African American youth in New York, who explained to her that they used different ways of talking at home and at school because they knew that speaking Standard English would be valued in a school setting. Carter’s interviewees pointed to dress, musical, and speech styles as the most salient cultural indicators of what it means to be authentically black. Carter, however, found there was a certain amount of tension involved in these students’ navigation of their home and school identities. Students told her they could easily navigate the different cultural markers and language of the two environments. However, in some cases, the youth “sensed that their cultural presentations of selves negatively influenced teachers’ evaluations” (150). Black youth who wish to maintain cultural authenticity have to work hard to maintain an appropriate balance. However, middle-class white youth whose families and communities value dominant cultural capital do not have to worry about this balancing act. As Carter explains, the black youth she worked with

perceived that teachers evaluated them as deficient based on the teachers’ and the schools’ standards of cultural decorum. They understood that most Whites with whom they came into contact used Standard English primarily, the language that facilitates success in U.S. schools (although it is not a sufficient condition by itself). At the same time, they did not believe their own speech styles to be incompatible with school success. (151)

adultify When a teacher or other authority figure interprets children’s behavior as if they were adults.

Although most teachers have good intentions, the reality is that teachers are members of our society and, like all of us, they are inundated with media images that reinforce stereotypes. The prevalence of stereotypes about blacks and criminality, for example, influences how teachers respond to black boys who misbehave. This, in turn, affects black boys’ schooling outcomes. Ann Arnett Ferguson (2001) offers a poignant example from a school in California where a white teacher compared black children who didn’t return library books to “looters.” Instead of seeing the children as careless or forgetful, the teacher resorted to racialized stereotypes of black men as thieves. Ferguson argues that cultural representations of black men as criminals serve to **adultify** black boys in the eyes of teachers. Thus, instead of seeing black boys as “just being boys” when they misbehave, teachers were inclined to say things such as “that boy has a jail cell with his name on it.”



Moesha

Prudence Carter’s (2003) work introduces us to a young African American woman named Moesha, who had recently graduated from high school, found an entry-level job, and taken a few college courses. Moesha was what Carter calls a “cultural straddler” in that she was able to use “black” cultural capital as well as dominant cultural capital, depending on the situation. However, Moesha perceived that there are tensions between dominant and “black” cultural capital.

Moesha explained to Carter in an interview:

We’re [African Americans] not ignorant; there are just certain ways that we talk to each other. It might not seem right, but that doesn’t mean we’re dumb. See I know people who can act ignorant [clownish] as anything, but they are also smart, and they can also talk in an intelligent way. It’s just that when you talk with your friends, you talk in a certain way. Or when you’re at work or wherever you’re at, you have to act intelligent.

Later, Moesha explained how these ideas were carried over into the school setting:

There were like certain teachers, they would give you attitude for no reason. And you’re like . . . I didn’t do anything. But for me, it was only like for certain friends that I had [who] were outspoken, and me I was very passive. I’d let whoever say whatever. And [my friends] weren’t like that. I guess . . . for my friends, I didn’t like the way that the teacher would talk to them. I had friends that . . . were very smart. They were very, very smart, and the teachers think that because they are a certain way, and they act a certain way, that they are not smart. And that’s not true. They are; they are very smart. It’s important that you learn about people.

Even though Moesha had learned that she was expected to use Standard English and deferential modes of behavior in school to gain the teacher's favor, she recognized that these expectations also meant that students who were more outspoken were mistreated.

It is also important to think about the fact that whereas white, middle-class students can use the same speech styles and behavioral mannerisms at home and at school, children from working-class and non-white communities are expected to alter their behavior when at school. This puts a certain burden on students who do not hail from the dominant culture. In addition, it sends home a strong message when a teacher tells a student that the way he or she (and his or her parents) speaks at home is "ignorant."

Source: Carter 2003.



Hidden Curricula and the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Schools are sites of socialization and learning: students learn to become members of society and develop the skills necessary to be successful. The official curricula of schools include subjects such as math, science, history, and, increasingly, test-taking skills. Schools are also meant to function as sorting mechanisms: students who work hard and perform well will become the future leaders of society. Some education scholars argue that there is also a **hidden curriculum**, in that the school curriculum is designed to reflect the cultural hegemony and ensure the class interests of the dominant group. From this perspective, schools also function as sorting mechanisms, but not in a meritocratic fashion. Instead, schools reproduce the status quo.

One of the ways that schools reproduce racial inequality is through rules and punishment. Students are evaluated not only on their achievement, but also on their ability to conform to rules. Punishment for rule breaking becomes a mechanism of social differentiation and normalization. The disciplinary techniques used by schools label children as "good," "bad," "gifted," and "troublemakers," and children are judged on their ability to conform to school rules (Ferguson 2001, 52).

In her book *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*, Ann Arnett Ferguson argues that teachers are more likely to interpret the behavior of African American boys as defiant or inappropriately expressive (2001). As a result of this interpretation and labeling, these students are more likely to receive punishment. There is a certain circularity here: since punishment often involves exclusion from the classroom, these students fall further behind.

This circularity is a crucial part of what some scholars call the **school-to-prison pipeline**—a set of practices that leads to children being funneled from public

hidden curriculum

Underlying curriculum designed to reflect and promote the interests of the dominant class.

school-to-prison pipeline

A set of practices that lead to children being funneled from public schools into the juvenile and criminal justice system.

schools into the juvenile and criminal justice system. Factors contributing to this pipeline include a rise in suspension rates across the country and increased policing of and arrests within schools. These practices build up over the course of a child's educational career and have harmful effects on black and Native American youth in particular. Across all age groups, starting with preschool, black students are three times more likely than white students to be suspended from school, and Native American students, twice as likely. Relatedly, black and Native American students are also twice as likely as other students to be subject to school-related arrests (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2014).

research focus

The Asian American Achievement Paradox

In a 2015 book, Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou explored the factors that have led to Asian American educational success in the United States. One of the factors they focus on is the *hyperselectivity* of Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants—a pattern whereby these immigrants have much higher rates of educational attainment than the general population in their countries of origin. In China, for example, only about 4 percent of adults hold a bachelor's degree or higher. In contrast, 50 percent of Chinese immigrants to the United States hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Chinese immigration to the United States is thus hyperselective in terms of college education.

Moreover, more than half of college-educated immigrants have an advanced degree such as a master's or a doctorate, making Chinese immigrants far more educated than those who do not emigrate. The numbers are not as stark for Vietnamese, although they are still quite remarkable. Whereas only 5 percent of people in Vietnam have college degrees, 23 percent of Vietnamese immigrants in the United States have college degrees. Both Chinese and Vietnamese immigration is highly selective.

Selectivity works very differently in the case of Mexicans. People in Mexico are much more likely to have college degrees than people in China—17 percent versus 4 percent. Only 5 percent of Mexican immigrants to the United States, however, have bachelor's degrees or higher. For Mexican immigrants, then, we witness negative educational selectivity, when compared with the general population in Mexico.

In addition to positive educational selectivity, Vietnamese immigrants to the United States have received assistance from the United States government due to their designation as refugees. Whereas Mexican immigrants are often ineligible for welfare, Vietnamese refugees received cash and other forms of assistance from the government to assist them in getting settled.

The children of Chinese, Vietnamese, and Mexican immigrants have different educational outcomes in part due to the different circumstances they confront in the United States. Over half of the children of Mexican immigrants have a parent who lacks a high school diploma, compared with only 6 percent of their Chinese and 12 percent of their Vietnamese counterparts.

As Lee and Zhou point out, the children of Mexican immigrants in their study nevertheless achieved tremendous *intergenerational* mobility. Even though more than half of their parents did not graduate from college, only 14 percent of the children dropped out of high school. Moreover, the children of Mexican immigrants in their study had a college graduation rate of 18 percent, which is three times that of their parents. In contrast, the college completion rate of the Chinese children of immigrants in their study is only slightly higher than that of their parents.

For Discussion

1. What is hyperselectivity, and how does it relate to patterns of Chinese migration?
2. Why do Lee and Zhou argue that the children of Mexican immigrants experience higher rates of intergenerational mobility than the children of Chinese immigrants?

Source: Lee and Zhou 2015.

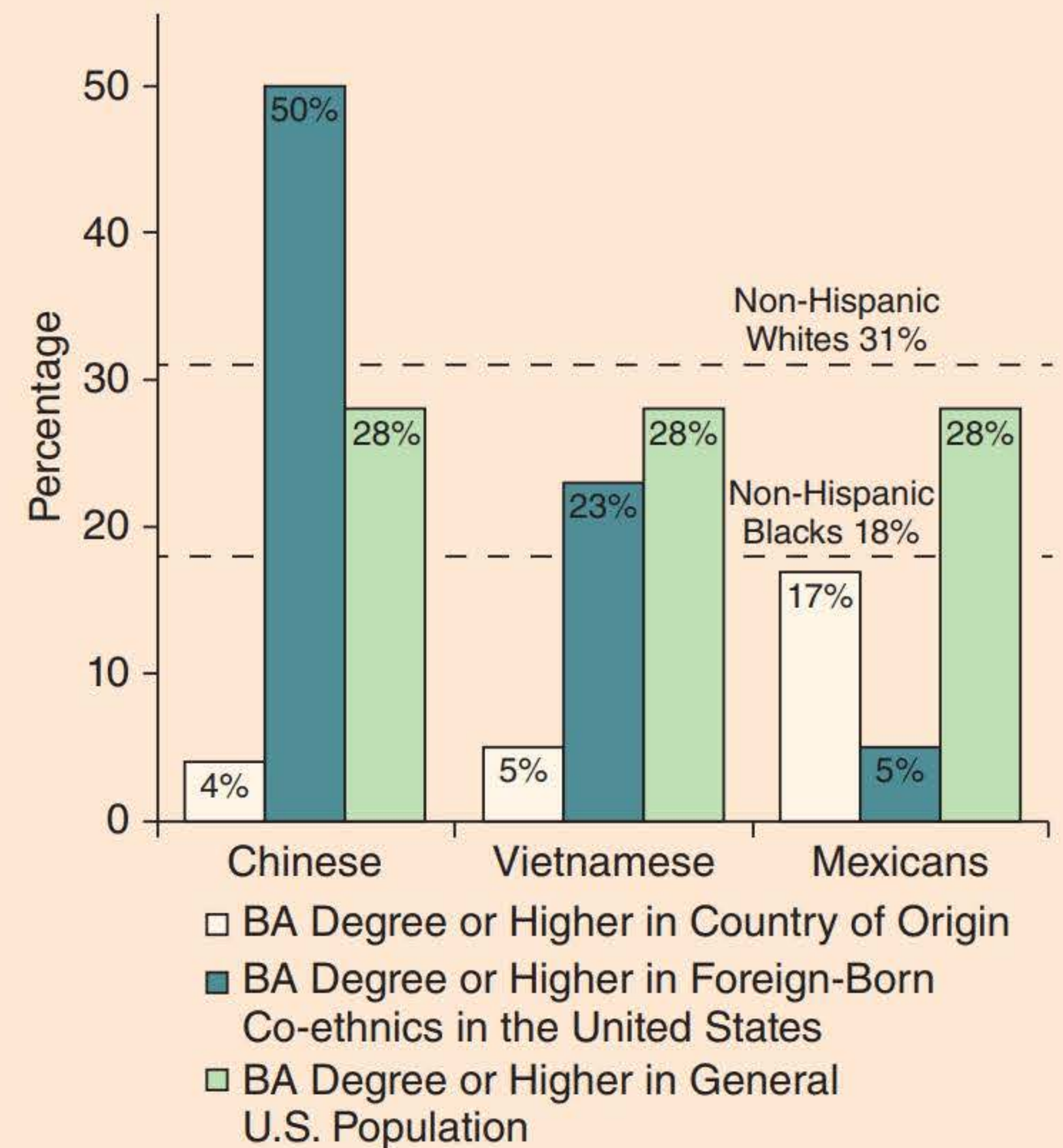


FIGURE RF 8.1
Immigrant Selectivity: Chinese, Vietnamese, and Mexican Immigrants Age 25 or Older with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In the United States, one-third of adults over the age of twenty-five have a bachelor's degree. With the changing labor market and growing inequality, postsecondary education has become increasingly important. An individual's opportunities for financial stability increasingly depend on completing college.

In this chapter, we have explored the various dimensions of educational inequality. There are many sociological explanations for why Native Americans, Latinos, and African Americans are less likely than white adults to have a college degree. Some of these reasons are historical; the parents of many people of color

did not have college degrees because of extreme barriers to higher education in the past. There are also socioeconomic explanations. For example, it is more difficult to attend college if you are in a financially precarious situation, and whites have, on average, higher incomes than other groups. There are also structural and cultural explanations for racial disparities in educational outcomes.

What do we do with all of this information? Many fantastic public schools across the country continue to be primarily or exclusively white. Meanwhile, there are vastly underresourced and even dangerous schools that primarily serve black, Latino, and Native American youth. What does it say about us as a nation that we do not give truly equal opportunities to children from disadvantaged backgrounds?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

affirmative action 227

“model minority” myth 230

achievement gap 232

oppositional culture 235

acting white 235

social capital 237

cultural capital 237

institutional agent 238

symbolic violence 238

adultify 240

hidden curriculum 241

school-to-prison pipeline 241

8.1 What are the dimensions of racial inequality in our educational system? (pp. 220–228)

- The United States has a long history of educational inequality. In the early twentieth century, Native American, African American, and Mexican American children were relegated to separate and inferior schools. Segregation was outlawed in 1954, yet it has produced lingering effects.

Review

- » How has educational attainment across racial and ethnic groups changed over time?
- » What are Indian schools, and what were the conditions like in those schools?
- » On what basis could plaintiffs in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case argue that schools were not “separate but equal”?
- » Why did it take so long for schools to become integrated after the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision?

Critical Thinking

- » What are some lingering effects of forced school segregation?
- » How might the concept of intergenerational trauma help us to understand racial inequalities today?

8.2 How important is the historical legacy of unequal educational opportunities? (pp. 228–232)

- Asian and white students tend to do better on tests, have higher GPAs, and have higher rates of college completion than African American, Native American, and Latino students.

Review

- » What is the relationship between school segregation and poverty?
- » Why have schools begun to resegregate since 1991?

Critical Thinking

- » Why is there so much variation in the educational success rates between Asian American students of different nationalities?

8.3 How can we explain the continuing gap in the educational achievements of white, Asian, black, Native American, and Latino students? (pp. 232–243)

- Sociologists offer several explanations for disparate educational outcomes, including oppositional culture explanations, tracking, social and cultural capital, and hidden curricula.

Review

- » Give examples of the theoretical explanations sociologists offer for the achievement gap.
- » What is the difference between social and cultural capital? How are social and cultural capital related to educational success?

Critical Thinking

- » Explain and reflect on the tension some youth face between maintaining cultural authenticity and being perceived as serious students. How much does this resonate with your personal experience?
- » How do racial ideologies play a role in reproducing racial inequalities within the school system?

Specify which racial ideologies you are referring to and how they are connected to inequality.

- » Which explanation for the achievement gap do you find most convincing? Why?
- » To what extent do you think that black children do less well in school than white children because of the desire not to be perceived as “acting white”? On what empirical basis do you make your arguments?
- » How are social and cultural capital important for school success? Can you reflect on the importance of social and cultural capital in your own educational experiences?

Talking about Race

Imagine someone said to you that Asians are naturally gifted at math. Based on what you have read in this chapter, what are some ways you could respond to such a statement? Could you talk about the variation in Asian American rates of success? Could you talk about hyperselectivity? What other factors do you think can help us unravel the model minority myth?



The Female Workers Were the Last to Arrive North (The Migration Series, Panel No. 57). Jacob Lawrence. 1940–1941. Casein tempera on hardboard. (*The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., USA/Acquired 1942/Bridgeman Images*)

Income and Labor Market Inequality

As You Read

- 9.1 What is the extent of income inequality, and how does it vary by race, ethnicity, and gender?
- 9.2 What are some dimensions of labor market inequality?
- 9.3 How do sociologists explain labor market inequality?
- 9.4 Can affirmative action be an appropriate remedy for labor market discrimination?
- 9.5 What is the relationship between self-employment and labor market inequality?

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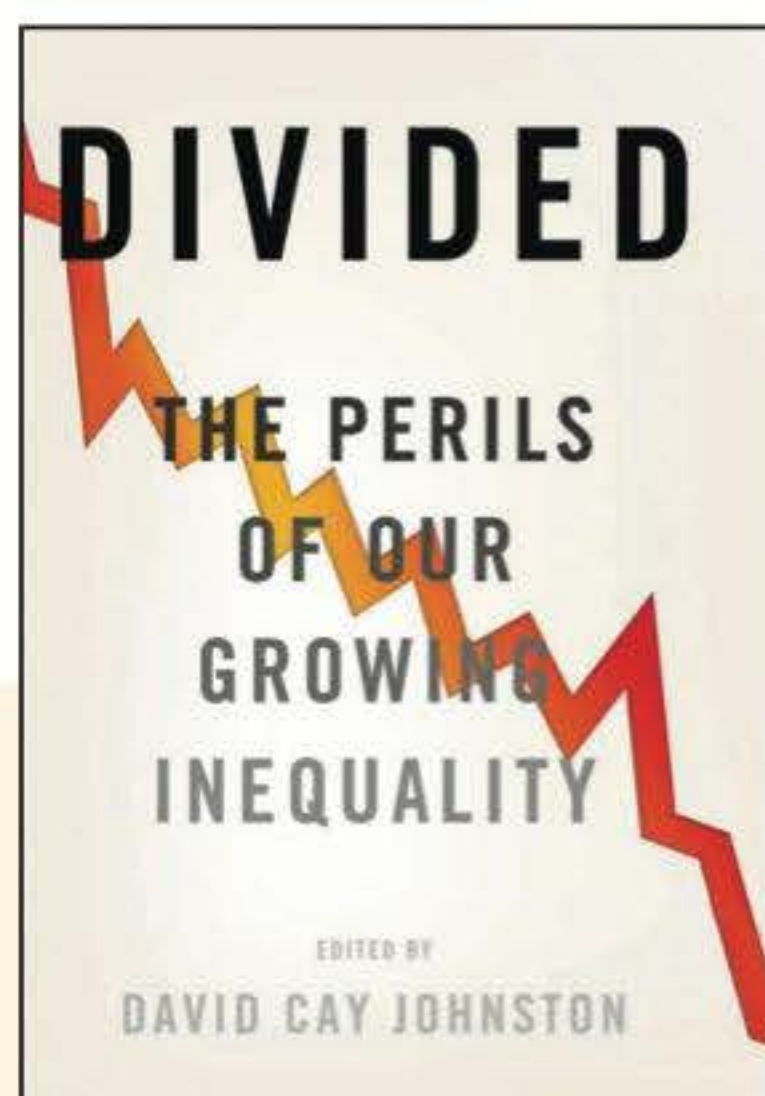
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In the following excerpt, journalist David Cay Johnston describes the contours of growing inequality in the United States. Whereas average wages have stagnated and even decreased, income at the top has grown exponentially.

From the end of World War II until the early 1970s, the vast majority of Americans enjoyed steadily improving lives. Wages increased and a growing share of workers benefited from steady employment with fringe benefits such as health care, paid vacations, and pensions. The number of jobs grew steadily, especially for work requiring a college education or advanced degrees, as taxpayer investments in basic research produced tangible products and life-extending services. Many more people became home owners, often finding that their monthly outlay was less than when they rented. Poverty remained a problem, but it was in decline, especially for older Americans. For most families with children one income was enough. Americans had debts, but they grew in tandem with the economy. Cars were typically bought on three-year loans, not the five-, six-, and seven-year loans common today. The real income reported on federal tax returns by the vast majority of Americans, the 90 percent, doubled between the end of the war and 1973.

Then the lives of the vast majority stopped getting better and, after a few years, began a long and painful slide backward. Unions dwindled, shifting the power to set pay from organized groups of workers with advice from market experts to individual employees negotiating, or more often just accepting, pay set by employers. The rising costs of health care diverted more compensation from cash wages to insurance premiums. Trade rules that often favored other nations destroyed many well-paying manufacturing jobs, including more than 50,000 factories and 2.8 million jobs offshored to China.

As a result, the vast majority's average income rose above the 1973 level only four times—1999, 2000, 2001, and 2007—and even then added only the equivalent of one additional week's income to each year. By 2012 the average income of the vast majority had shrunk to the equivalent of 45 weeks of 1973 income—a 13 percent decline to \$30,997 from \$35,584 in 1973, expressed in 2012 dollars.

Between 1998 and 2011, the median weekly wage—half make more, half less—stagnated between \$533 and \$546 in 2012 dollars, then dropped in 2012 to \$529 and change, or \$27,519 for the year. Almost a third of the 153.6 million Americans with a job at any time in 2012 made less than \$15,000, averaging just \$6,100.

In recent years nearly all of the income growth has been in jobs paying more than \$75,000—about one in every eight jobs. At the top, pay soared. In 2012 the number of people whose jobs paid cash wages of \$5 million or more grew by 27 percent to 8,982 workers while their inflation-adjusted combined pay increased by 40 percent over 2011.

While the average income of the vast majority in 2012 fell back to the level of 1966 (actually, \$9 less than in 1966), the news got only better for the top 1 percent. They saw their average incomes rise from nearly \$441,000 to \$1,264,000, a real increase that nearly tripled their pretax incomes. At the very, very top, the news was nothing short of fantastic. The top 1 percent of the top 1 percent, or one in every 10,000 households, saw their average income skyrocket from \$5.4 million in 1966 to almost \$30.8 million in 2012. That means that for every \$1 in 1966 income, each household at the top reported \$5.67 in 2012. Most of these are not the same people, but the figures tell us how, as a group, America rewarded its wealthiest, while the vast majority (also not the same people, forty-six years later) saw their incomes wither.

Meanwhile, poverty is worsening. Among developed countries only Romania has a larger share of its children in poverty. In any recent year, more than one in five American children lived in a home without enough food for everyone at all times. Black and Hispanic children are five times more likely than children overall to live in households with what our government euphemistically calls “very low food security.” Food banks report that their shelves often go bare before the lines of people are served and that most of their new customers since 2008 are married couples with children who used to have two jobs and now have none. To people accustomed to a pantry full of food and a refrigerator with not enough shelf space for everything that comes home from the grocery store, this may be hard to grasp. Yet one in every fifty-two people you meet today, statistically, has no income except food stamps.

Source: Johnston 2015.

In *Divided*, Johnston (2015) considers the rise of income inequality in the United States. After World War II, quality of life for those in the working and middle classes improved each year until 1973, when average income began to fall. Meanwhile, the income of the upper classes began to skyrocket. Today, the United States is one of the most unequal countries in the Western Hemisphere. Moreover, inequality is mapped along race and gender lines, with African

Americans and Latinos earning substantially less than whites. We see this racial inequality not just in income but also in the labor market as a whole. In this chapter, we will take a closer look at income and labor market inequality and develop a deeper understanding of racial inequality in the United States today.

Studies of labor market discrimination and income inequality clearly show that men earn more than women and that white workers earn more than non-white workers, even accounting for differences in education, skills, years on the job, and productivity (Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009). Why are employers willing to pay a premium for white male workers? It seems as if in a capitalist society, employers should want to get the best worker they can for the lowest price. Yet the evidence suggests that employers routinely pass over highly qualified black and Latino candidates and offer raises and promotions

to white candidates (Pager and Shepard 2008). Why do you think this is the case? Why are employers less likely to hire black and Latino candidates? Why are highly qualified Asians paid less than their white counterparts?



▲ With the Washington Monument in the background, activists stand in place to form a “99%,” part of Occupy DC activities in 2011 to protest income and wealth inequality.

INCOME INEQUALITY BY RACE, ETHNICITY, AND GENDER

Before delving into inequalities among racial and ethnic groups, it is worth pointing out that in the United States, the difference in earnings between the richest and the poorest people has widened over the past few decades. Income inequality among Americans has increased in large part because of tremendous growth in the incomes of the highest earners and stagnation or decline in the incomes of the lowest earners. Although the average national household income was about \$64,500 in 2000, which was 60 percent more than it had been in 1980 (in constant 2014 dollars), the average income of the bottom 50 percent of earners was only \$16,000—the same as it was in 1980. By 2014, the top 50 percent of earners were taking in 88 percent of all income, up from about 80 percent in 1980. The top 1 percent alone took in 20 percent of all income. In fact, the average income of the top 1 percent rose from \$420,000 in

1980 to \$1.3 million in 2014—81 times more than the average income of the bottom 50 percent (Piketty, Saez, and Zucman 2016).

You may recall the slogans of the “Occupy Wall Street” movement referring to this income (and wealth) disparity, such as: “We are the 99%.” Tensions over inequality in the United States have risen in recent years in response to rising inequality. In 2013, the richest 20 percent of the U.S. population earned sixteen times more, on average, than the poorest 20 percent. In this regard, the United States compares unfavorably to both Mexico and Uruguay, as shown in Figure 9-1.

The United States has become one of the most unequal advanced economies in the world in terms of income, with a Gini coefficient of 43. (By comparison,

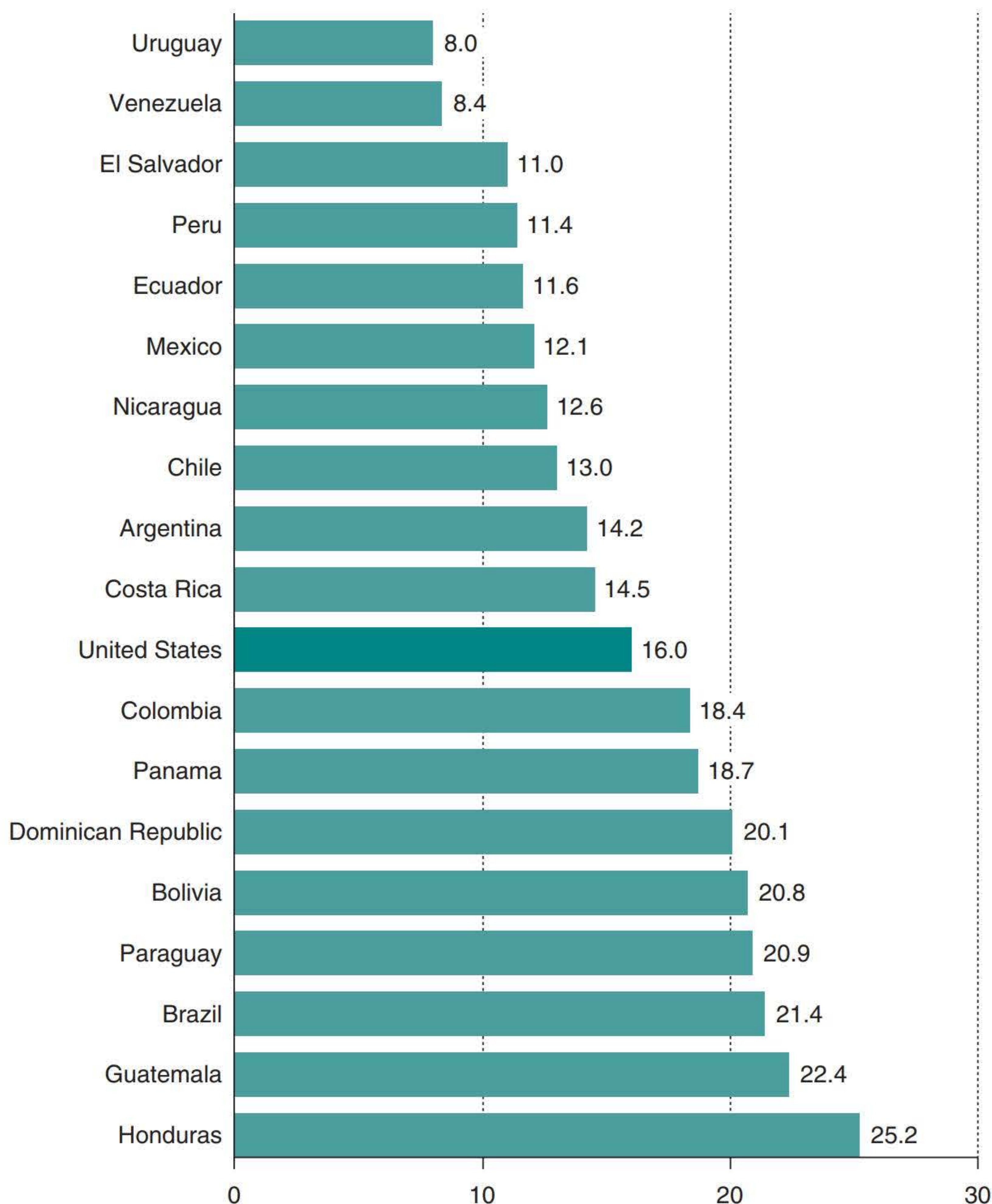


FIGURE 9-1.
Inequality in the Americas
The higher the number, the greater the economic inequality, calculated by dividing the annual income of the richest 20 percent by the annual income of the poorest 20 percent.

Source: U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and U.S. Census, cited by Isacson (2013).

Gini coefficient A measure of inequality, with 0 representing perfect equality and 100 representing perfect inequality.

Norway’s Gini coefficient is 23.) The **Gini coefficient** is a measure from 1 to 100, with 0 representing perfect equality (i.e., everyone earning exactly the same amount) and 100 representing perfect inequality (i.e., a single person having all the earnings) (International Labor Organization 2013). This inequality is problematic both because it means that the United States has an increasingly large poor population and because inequality is related to a host of health and social problems, including high rates of low birth weight, homicide, mental illness, and violent crime (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009).

Compared with similar nations, the United States is the most unequal on a variety of other measures as well. In addition to having the highest Gini coefficient, it also ranks last in child poverty rates, has the largest ratio between the richest 10 percent and the poorest 10 percent, and has the highest percentage of people living below 50 percent of the median income (Internationalcomparisons.org 2014; Figure 9-2).

Overall inequality is exacerbated by earnings inequality distributed along racial and ethnic lines. In the United States today, Asians have the highest median earnings, followed by whites and then blacks and Latinos

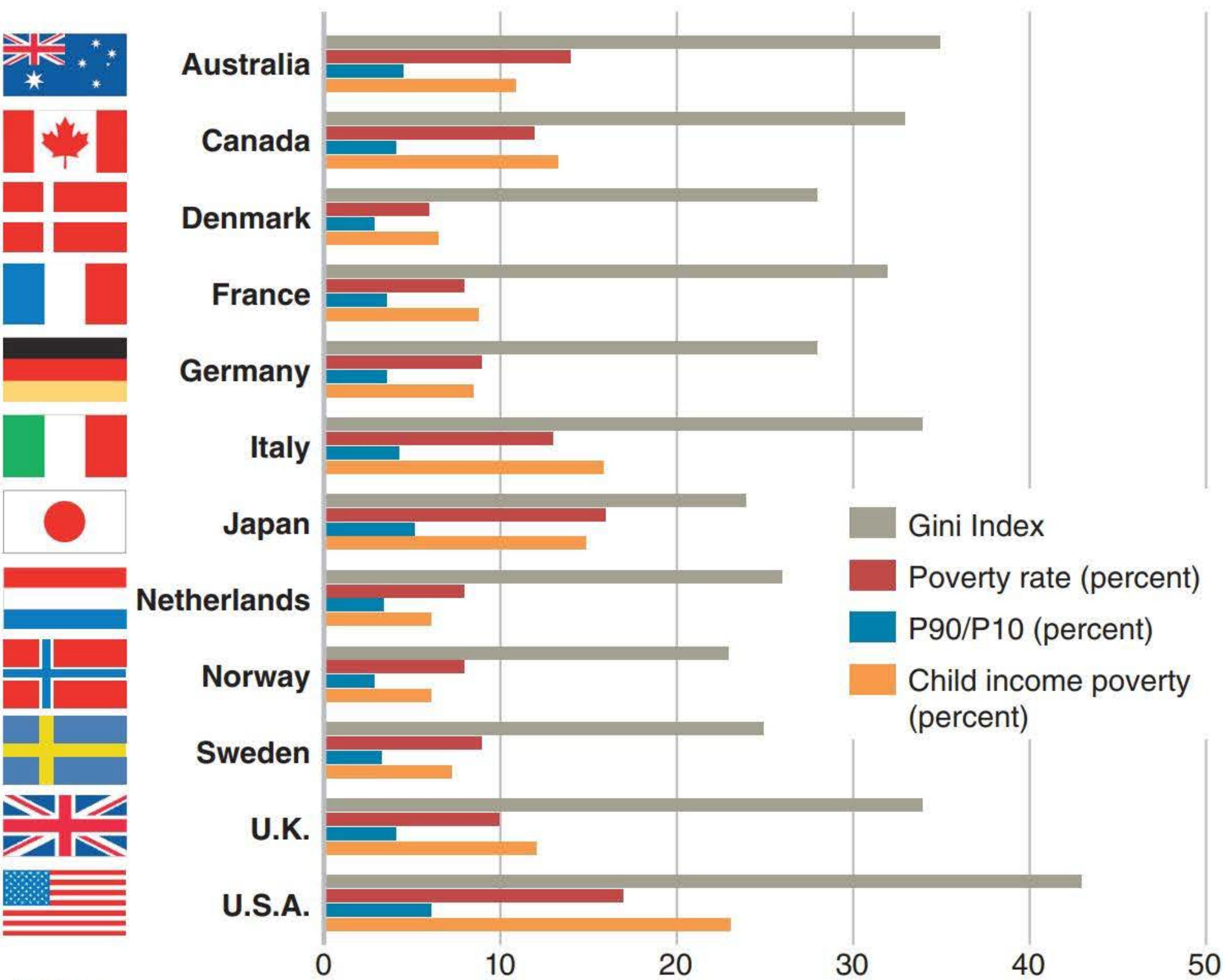


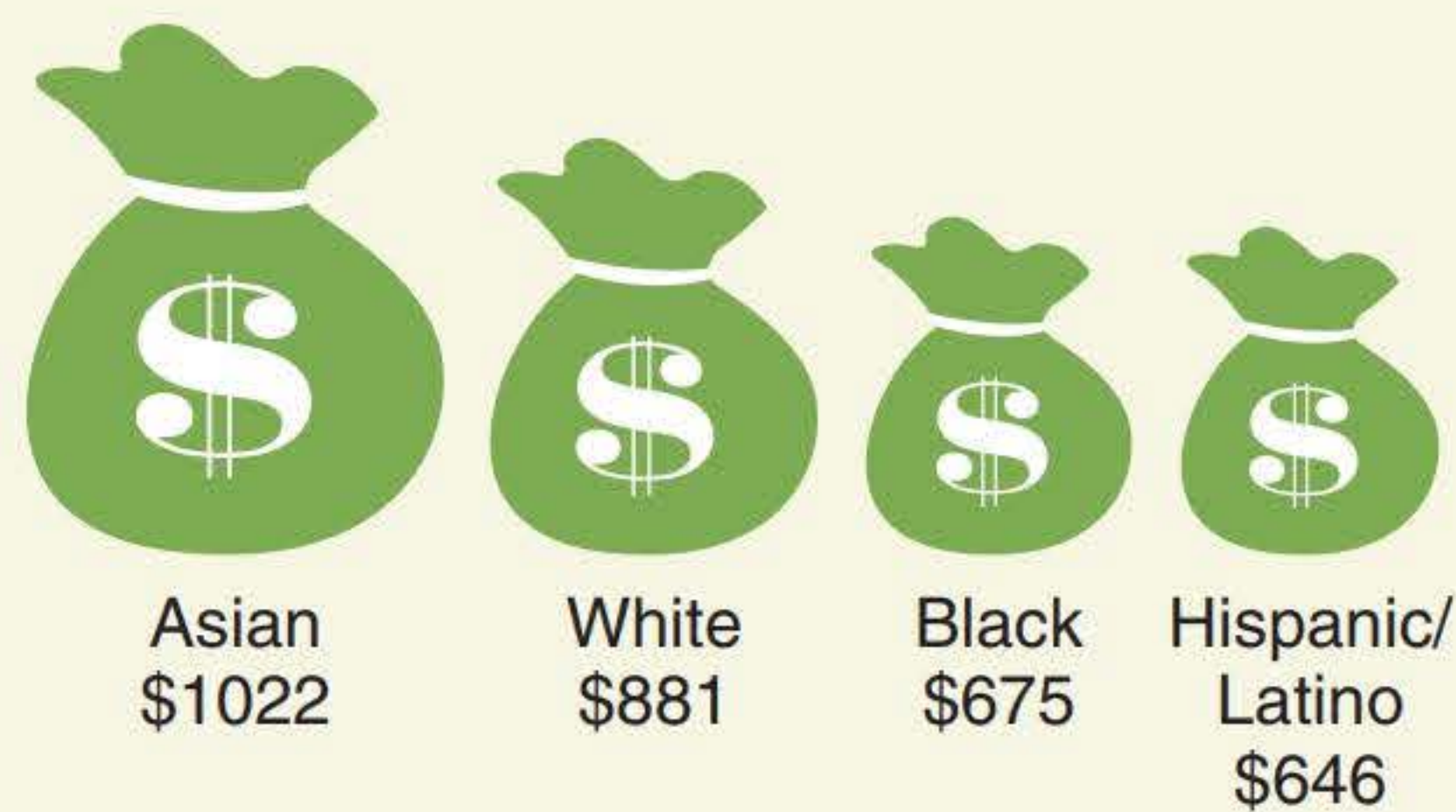
FIGURE 9-2.
Selected Inequality Measures for Advanced Economies. The United States is one of the most unequal advanced economies in the world by several measures.

Source: International Comparison. org (2017).

Notes:
P90/P10 is a measure of inequality via the ratio of the richest 10 percent to the remaining 90 percent.
Poverty rate is the percentage of people who make less than one-half of the median income.

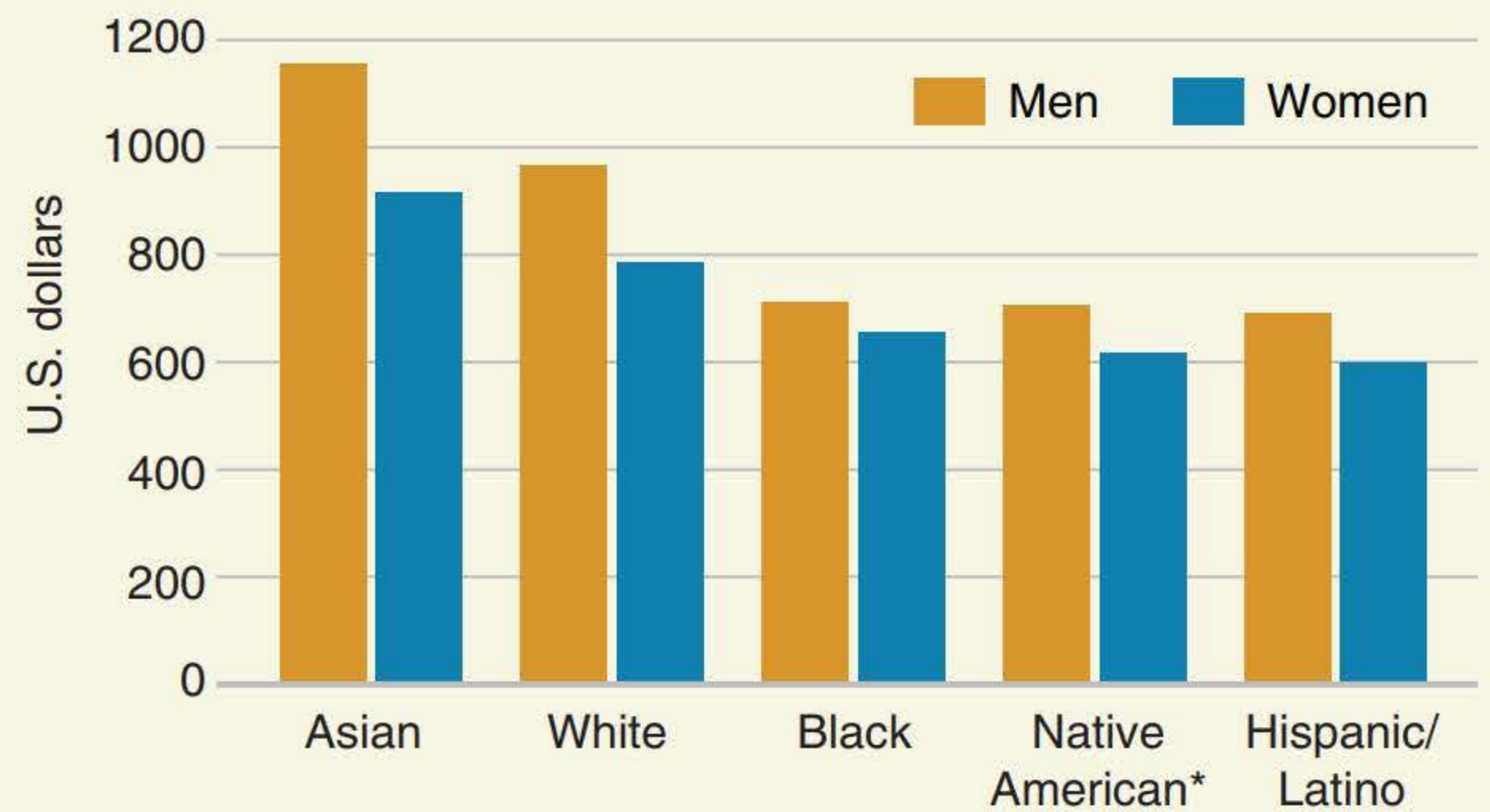
AT A GLANCE 9.1 Income and Labor Market Inequality

Median weekly earnings by race/ethnicity, 2016



U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017

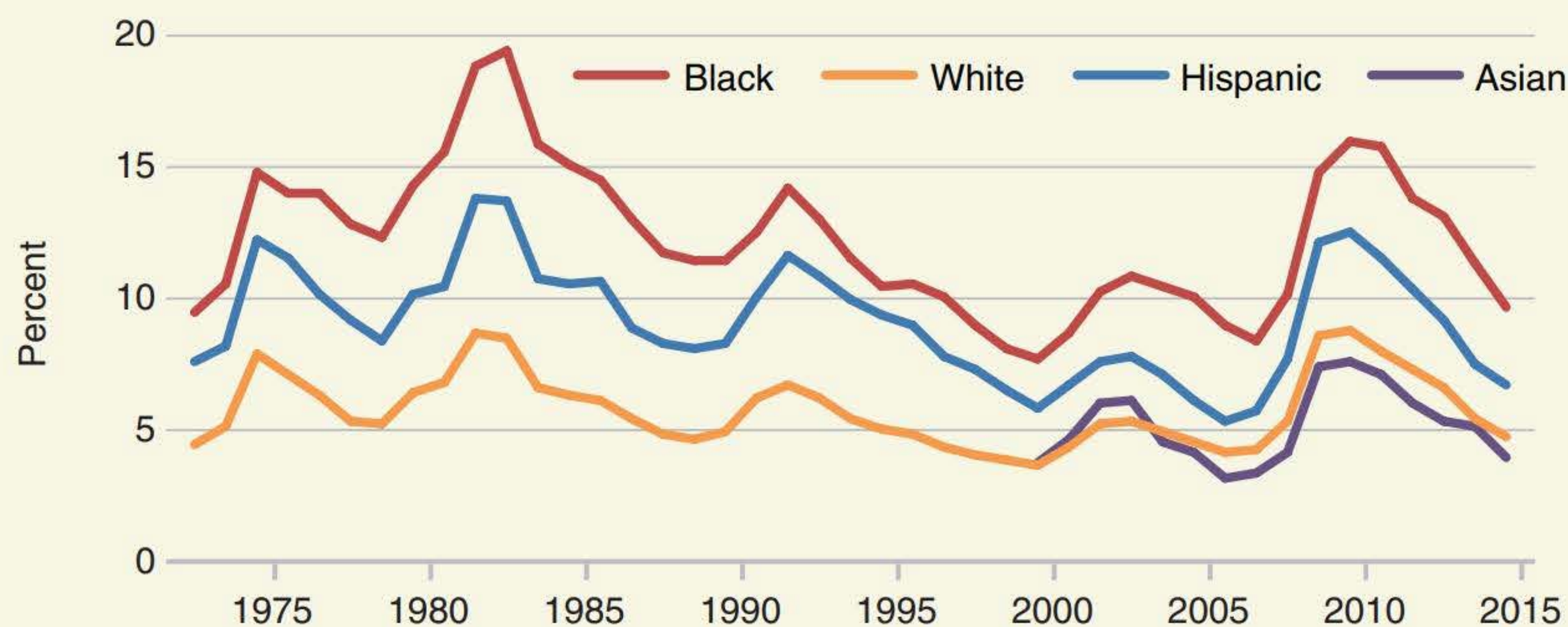
Median weekly earnings by race/ethnicity and gender, 2016



*Median earnings for Native American men and women are from the 2015 American Community Survey.

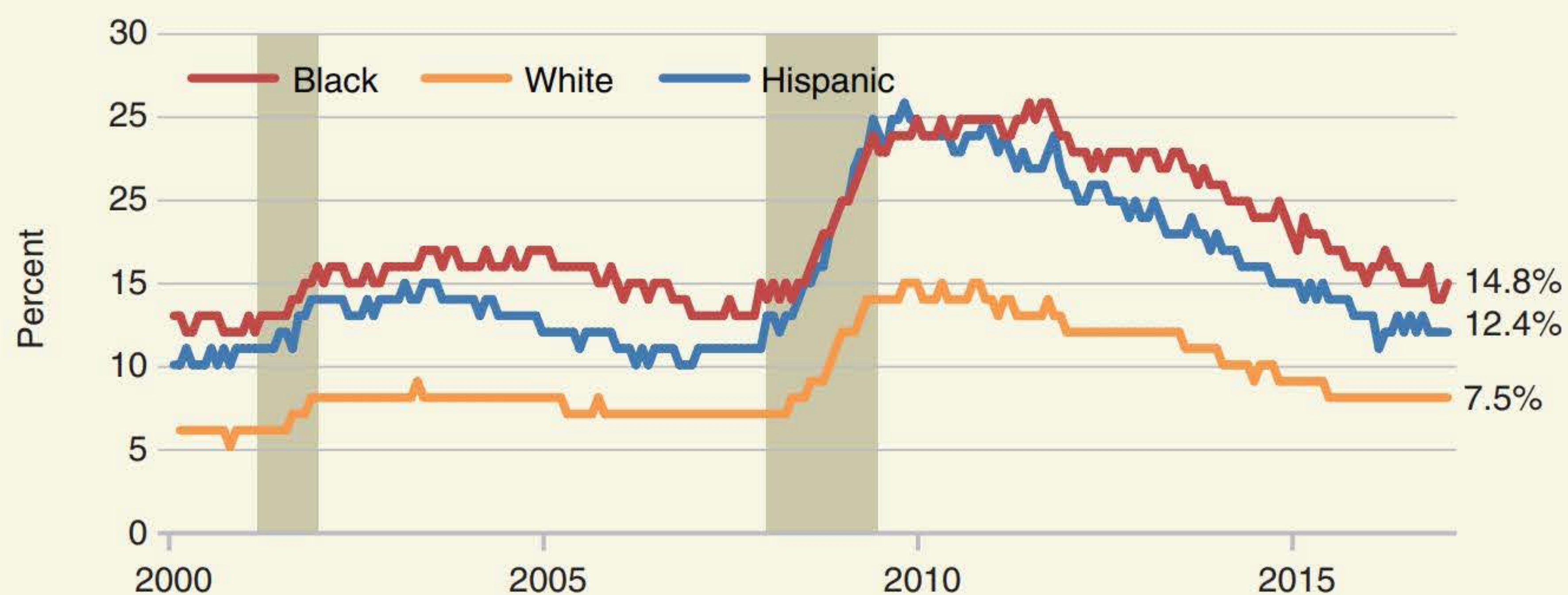
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017

Unemployment rate by race/ethnicity, 1973–2015 annual averages



U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016

Underemployment rate of workers ages 16 or older, by race/ethnicity, 2000–2017



*Shaded areas indicate recessions

EPI analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics basic monthly Current Population Survey microdata, 2017

earnings gap Differences in annual earnings among groups.

wage gap Differences in hourly earnings (wages).

(At a Glance 9.1). The median income of white workers in the United States has been higher than that of black workers for as long as we have kept track of income data. Such differences in earnings by group are called the **earnings gap**. Sociologists provide a wide array of explanations for this gap, and we will go over many of them later in this chapter.

How does income inequality by race and ethnicity further break down by gender? As we see in At a Glance 9.1, the largest difference in income is between Asian men—whose median weekly earnings were \$1,147 in 2016—and Latina women—whose median weekly earnings were \$595 per week. Notably, the gender income gap between Asian men and Asian women is also one of the largest, with Asian men earning 26 percent more than Asian women.

In addition to the earnings gap, sociologists have identified a **wage gap**, which refers to differences in hourly earnings among groups. Whereas the earnings gap refers to overall income regardless of hours worked, the wage gap refers only to the difference in the amount earned per hour worked. To understand earnings and wage gaps by group, we need to account for broader forces at work in the labor market.

DIMENSIONS OF RACIAL DISPARITIES IN THE LABOR MARKET

Disparities in earnings and wages are tied to many facets of the labor market, including unemployment rates, promotion practices, and employment stability. For example, black women are at a higher risk of unemployment than white women, meaning they are even more economically disadvantaged than the wage gap suggests (Pettit and Ewert 2009).

Is it harder for people from some racial or ethnic groups to obtain jobs? Are some groups less likely to be promoted? Are some groups less likely to be in stable employment? All of these factors are relevant to understanding the extent of labor market disparities.

Disparities among Women

First, let's look at how gender plays a role. There is a wage gap between men and women in the United States: women earn, on average, 83 cents an hour for each dollar that men earn (Gould, Schieder, and Geier 2016). Moreover, earnings differences by gender within and across racial and ethnic groups can be striking. White women earn 81 cents for each dollar that white men make. However, black women make only 65 cents for each dollar that white men make, and Latina women only 58 cents (Economic Policy Institute 2016)

(Figure 9-3). Thus, analyses of racial inequality in the labor market that do not take gender into account provide an incomplete picture (Browne and Misra 2003).

A study by Raine Dozier (2010) helps us understand how labor market forces affect the earnings gap between black and white women. Her study found that both groups experienced wage gains during the 1980s and 1990s, but white women gained more. Dozier explains that this disparity developed because white and black women were not equally represented in the job sectors that had the most earnings growth. Between 1980 and 2002, more women entered the labor force and more highly paid professional positions became available to them. White women were more likely to attain these highly paid positions and thus gain more than their black counterparts.

Black, white, and Latina women have different labor market outcomes, and these vary further by level of education. Among high school graduates aged eighteen to twenty-four, 61 percent of white women are employed, compared with 52 percent of black women and 55 percent of Latinas. The trends are distinct for college graduates: 86 percent of black female graduates aged 25 to 34 are employed, compared with 82 percent of white graduates and 77 percent of Latina graduates of the same age (Alon and Haberfeld 2007). These higher rates of labor force participation among young college-educated black women, however, do not translate into higher average incomes over the course of their careers.

Earnings disparities continue over the length of time spent in the workforce. We can see this by looking at wage differentials over time. For unskilled women—defined as women with a high school degree or less who do not have a skilled trade—first entering the labor market, the average hourly rate (in 1995 dollars) does not vary greatly by race and ethnicity: \$6.28 for black women, \$6.42 for white women, and \$6.67 for Latina women. However, by the fourteenth year in the labor market, white and Latina women are doing, on average, a lot better, with an average pay of \$10.04 and \$9.34 per hour, respectively. In contrast, after fourteen years of work, unskilled black women earn, on average, only \$7.48 per hour. Whereas the earnings of white and Latina women in low-skill jobs tend to increase over time, this is not the case for black women in low-skill jobs (Alon and Haberfeld 2007).

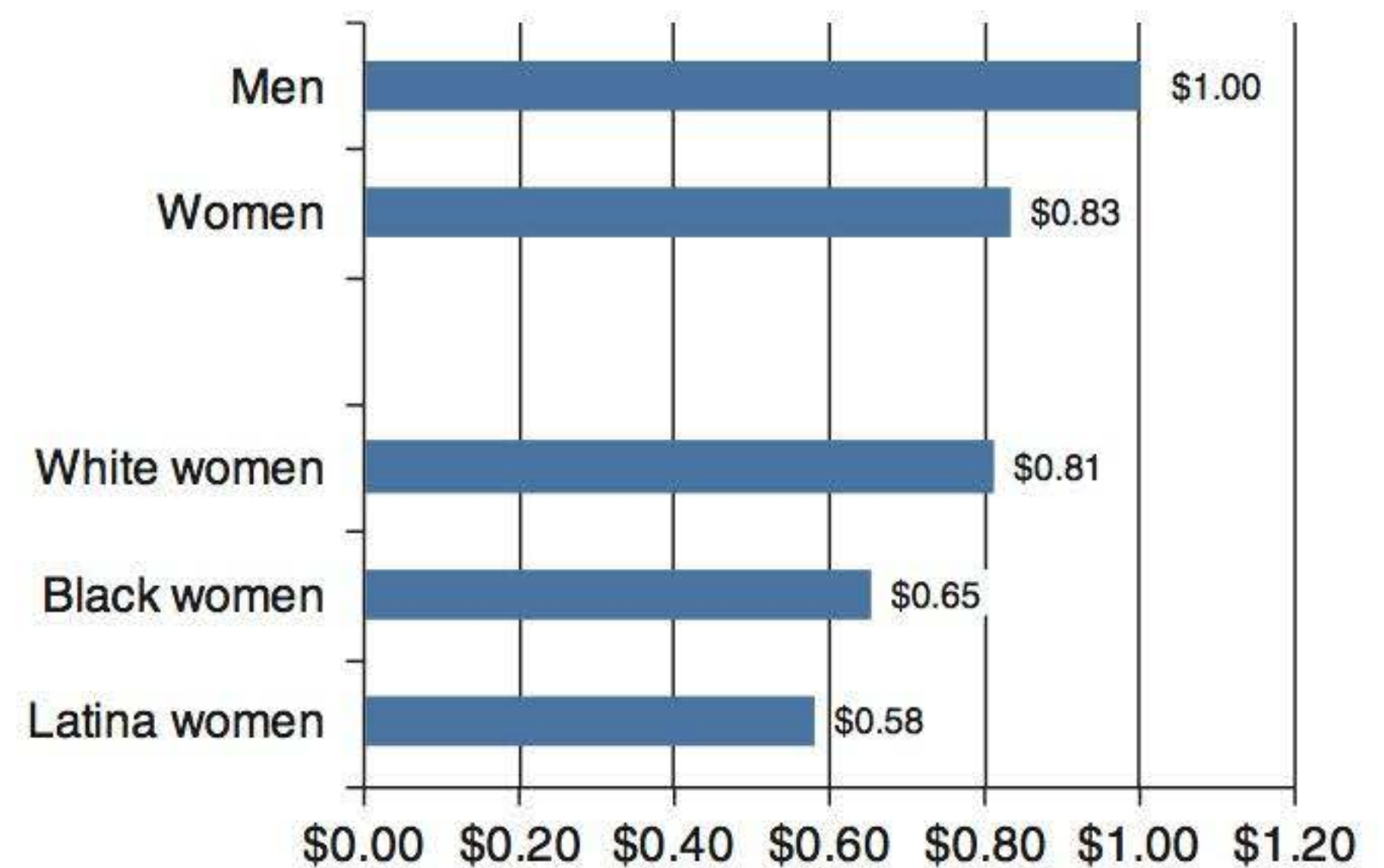


FIGURE 9-3.
Women's Hourly Earnings on the Dollar versus Men's by Race/Ethnicity

Source: Economic Policy Institute 2016.

> In the United States, women earn an average of 83 cents for each dollar that men earn. This pay gap was one of the reasons for the 2017 Women's March on Washington.

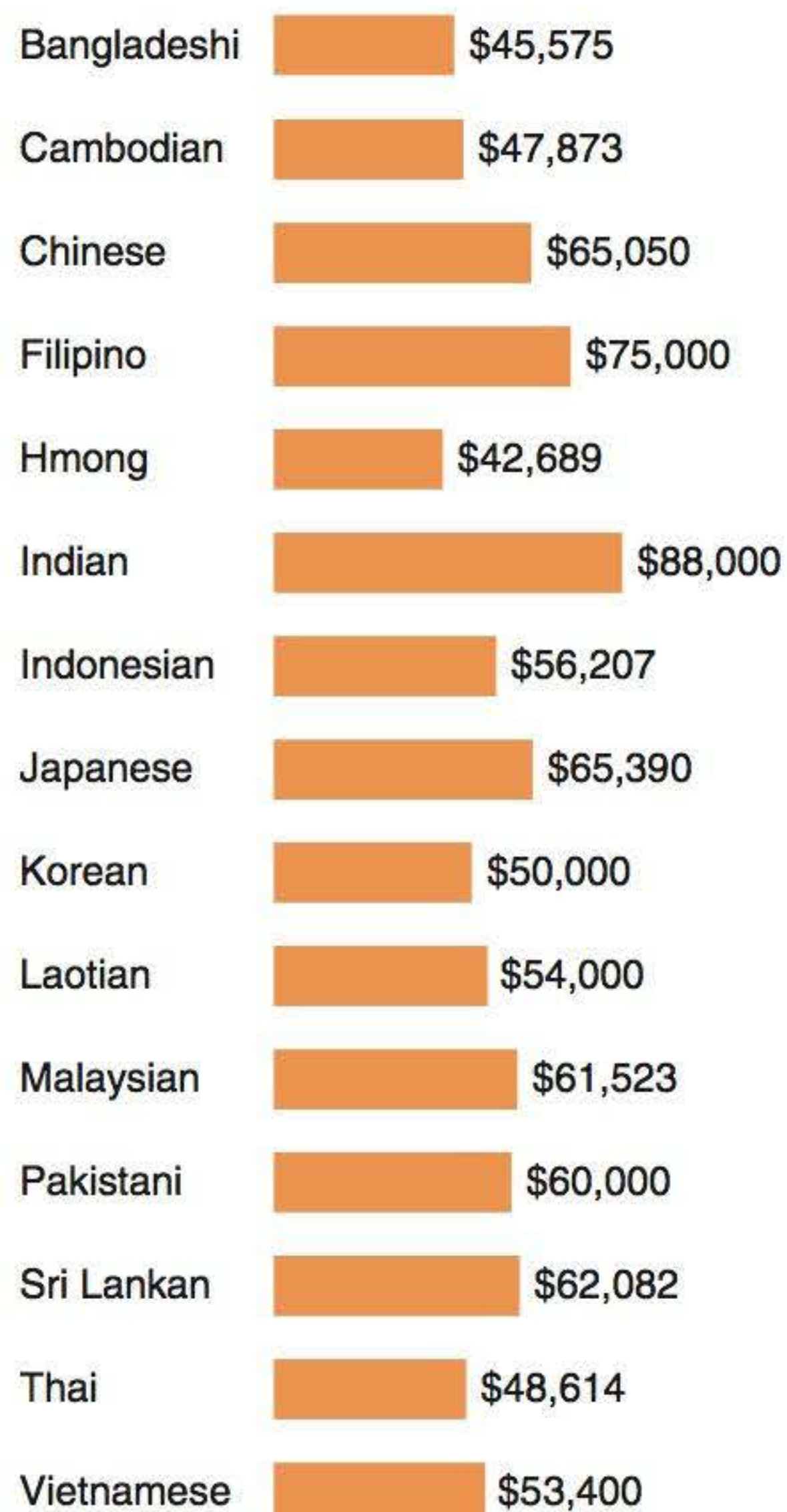


FIGURE 9-4.
Median Annual Earnings among Asian Americans by National Origin, 2010

Source: Pew Research Center (2012).

Disparities among Asian Americans

Given the tremendous diversity within the Asian American population, it can be helpful to break these groups down by national origin when analyzing economic disparities. There is a lot of variation in household income among Asian Americans of different national origins (Figure 9-4). Whereas the average annual household income for Indians in 2010 was \$88,000, it was only \$42,689 for Hmong households. Taking a close look at the average earnings of different national origins among Asians is even more instructive because the average household income could include one, two, three, or more earners. In contrast, when we look at hourly earnings, we get a better sense of individual-level outcomes. In 2014, the median annual hourly earnings for Indian men was nearly \$40 per hour, as compared to just less than \$30 for Indian women. In contrast, the average earnings for Hmong men and women were both less than \$15 per hour (Figure 9-5).

In a study using data from the 2000 U.S. census, Emily Greenman and Yu Xie (2008) looked at full-time, year-round workers between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-five. They found that among men, four groups had higher earnings than white men: Chinese, Asian Indians, Koreans, and Japanese. However, among women, in addition to those four groups, Cuban women and Filipina women also out-earn their white counterparts. Overall, Greenman and Xie found that white women earn seventy-one cents for each dollar that white men earn and that white women have the largest gender disadvantage of all

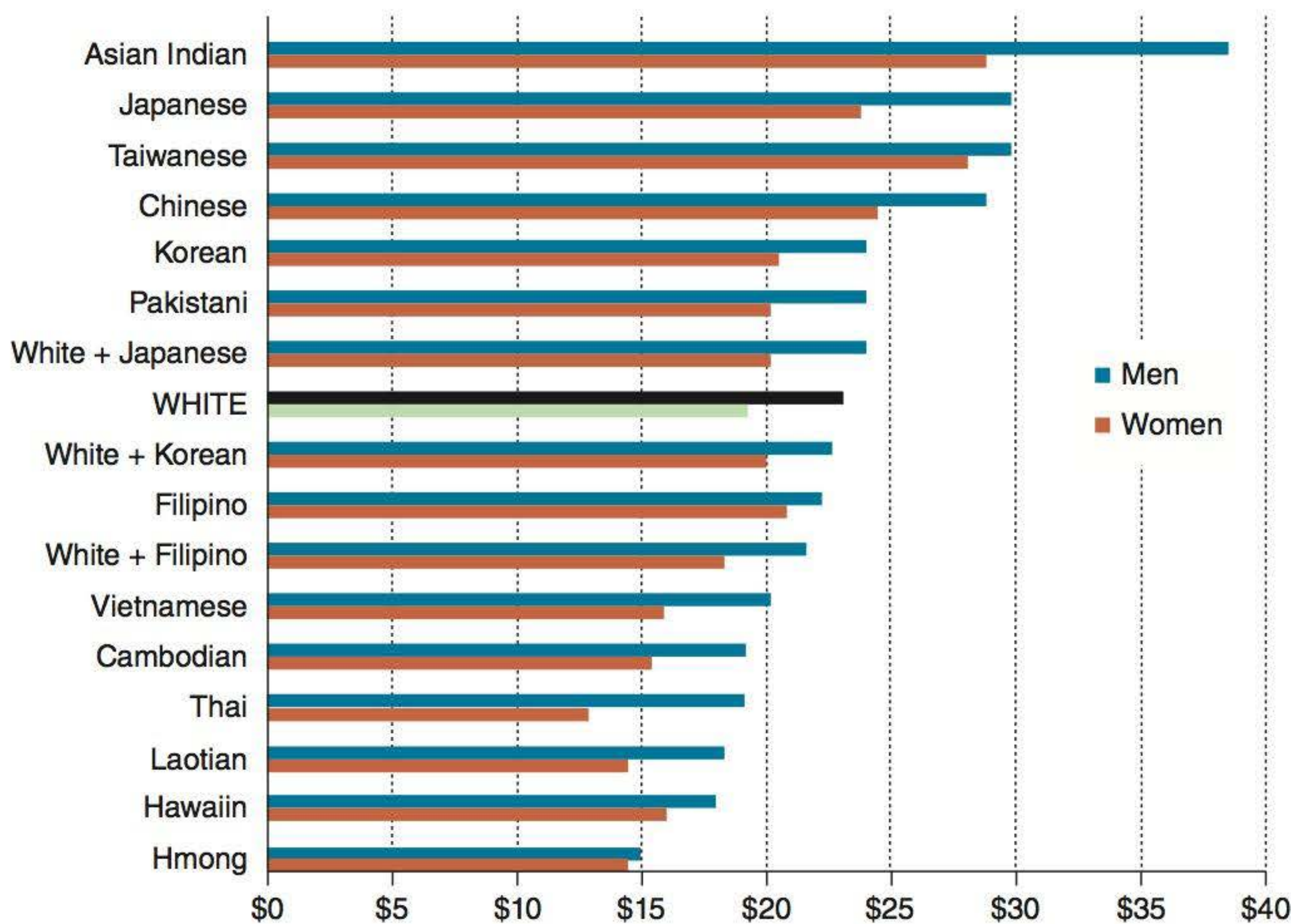


FIGURE 9-5.
Median Annual Hourly Earnings among Asian Americans by Gender and National Origin, 2014

Based on: <https://familyinequality.wordpress.com/2016/07/03/on-asian-american-earnings/>.

of the racial and ethnic groups. Korean women, for example, earned eighty-six cents for each dollar that Korean men earned, and black and Filipina women earned eighty-four cents for each dollar that their male counterparts earned. These results show that it is not the case that race and gender are additive factors in the labor market. Instead, racism and sexism operate in distinct ways for different ethnic and racial groups.

Asian American men have the highest average earnings in the United States. Does this mean they do not face discrimination? Not necessarily. Many sociologists have pointed out that Asians earn more than whites, but that their average earnings should actually be even higher because Asians have higher average educational attainment than whites. Because of how our society is organized, we should expect people with more education to earn more than their less educated counterparts, not the same or less. One study, for example, found that over half of Asians born in the United States complete college, compared with less than a third of whites. Asians are also more likely than other groups to major in areas that have higher pay, such as science and engineering (Kim and Sakamoto 2010).

ChangHwan Kim and Arthur Sakamoto (2010) conducted a study on whether Asian American men experience labor market discrimination. Their study included only men who were college graduates. Thus, it considered labor market discrimination among highly skilled workers. They found that Asian American men who are college graduates do earn more than their white counterparts. However, once you take into account the region where they live, their field of study, and their college type, native-born Asian American men have an 8 percent earnings disadvantage. In other words, if an Asian American man and a white man both live in New York, both went to selective universities, and both studied engineering, we could expect that the Asian man would earn, on average, 8 percent less than the white man. In contrast, Kim and Sakamoto found that Asian American men born abroad who went to school and now work in the United States do not experience a labor market disadvantage relative to white men.

Kim and Sakamoto's 2010 study only included college-educated men. However, in a follow-up study published in 2014, the researchers revealed that Asian American men without a college degree earn substantially less than their white counterparts. Kim and Sakamoto explain that the model-minority myth can have negative effects for Asians who do not achieve a certain level of educational success. The follow-up study showed particularly striking results for Asian American male high school dropouts, who earned significantly less than white male dropouts (Kim and Sakamoto 2014).

Underemployment, Unemployment, and Joblessness

Earnings inequality is compounded by unemployment rates. Earnings data do not factor in unemployed people, who may not be taking home any income. It is thus important to consider the effects of unemployment and underemployment on the bigger picture. These rates vary significantly by race and ethnicity, as shown in At a Glance 9.1. Since 1970, the unemployment rate for blacks has been about twice that for whites.

Wage differentials in the labor force provide a limited view of overall inequality, as analyses of the earnings gap account only for people who are actually working. Thus, the finding that the earnings gap between whites and blacks has decreased since 1980 may not be as promising as it seems in terms of racial equality, as we will see. The Bureau of Labor Statistics counts people as unemployed when they do not have a job and have actively looked for work in the previous month. Insofar as many people do not work and have given up looking for work, the unemployment rate is only one measure of joblessness (University of California Berkeley Labor Center 2013).

The labor market prospects of black and Latino workers also look bleak when we take underemployment into account. The **underemployment** category includes jobless workers actively seeking work, people who are working part time yet are available to work full time, and those who have looked for work in the past year yet are not actively seeking employment. In 2017, 15 percent of Latino workers and 13 percent of black workers met this definition of underemployed, compared with 8 percent of white workers. For all workers, these rates had improved since 2010, when 25 percent of black and Latino workers and 15 percent of white workers were underemployed (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017) (see At a Glance 9.1).

underemployment A category including jobless workers actively seeking work, people who are working part time yet are available to work full time, and those who have looked for work in the past year yet are not actively seeking employment.

Jarred



When factories closed in the 1980s, many workers found themselves unemployed after having worked decades at the same factory.

Jarred, a forty-nine-year-old African American grandfather, has been out of work for over a year. Unemployment is financially and emotionally taxing. His story is similar to that of many African American men who live in deindustrialized cities.

Voices

(continued)



Continued

Jarred's first job began shortly after he graduated from high school. He worked at a turkey farm for four years. He feels fortunate to have secured his second job in the better-paid manufacturing sector, where his father also worked, at a local turbine factory. He worked there for fourteen years, until a large-scale layoff in the 1980s—a time when many factories that provided good jobs to working-class men were closing.

After the layoff, Jarred was unemployed for nine months before securing another job. This job was also in the manufacturing sector and provided a living wage. Jarred was the only African American man in the plant where he worked. He remained there for four years before being laid off again.

After his latest layoff, Jarred not only has trouble supporting his two children and three stepchildren, but also feels emotionally drained. Jarred defines his masculinity in part through his ability to work. Being unemployed feels “degrading” to him. He explained to Kenlana Ferguson, who interviewed him:

Being unemployed [is] . . . rough. Now, I've been out of work since October 28th of last year, and it's a degrading feeling. . . . If you don't watch it, it'll ruin your manhood because it comes to the point where you just feel like you worked all those years for nothing at all. . . . I just want to keep building on what I've already worked for. . . .

My wife and I have three grandkids living with us full time. So, a family that size and you're going from \$60 grand a year to \$15,900. It's a big loss.

Jarred's wife is disabled, and her disability check is not enough to support their family. He continues to look for work, but his chances are relatively low, given that he is nearly fifty years old and there are many other men in the town where he lives who have also been laid off and are looking for work. The chances of his finding a well-paying manufacturing job are even slimmer, as most of those jobs have moved overseas where employers can take advantage of lower wages and a more vulnerable workforce.

Source: Adapted from K. Ferguson 2012.

The 2 million people in the criminal justice system are also mostly outside the labor force, yet they are not included in the official counts of the unemployed either. In 1999, a third of black men aged twenty-two to thirty were jobless or incarcerated, compared with only 13 percent of their white counterparts (Western and Pettit 2005). As one example of how the incarceration

rate affects the jobless rate, we can consider another study by Western and Pettit (2002) that looked at the percentages of black and white high school dropouts with jobs. The study found that without taking the incarcerated population into account, 50 percent of black high school dropouts aged twenty-two to thirty had jobs, compared with 80 percent of white high school dropouts. After factoring in the incarcerated population, however, this percentage dropped to less than 30 percent for black male high school dropouts, compared with over 60 percent for their white counterparts (Figure 9-6; Western and Pettit 2002).

Western and Pettit (2005) found that the gains in black men's wages between 1980 and 1999 must be assessed in light of the large numbers of black men who went to prison and became jobless during that same time period. Incarceration is an important factor in assessing labor market inequality for black men. If we look at labor market inequality without taking into account incarceration rates, we will have an incomplete picture because large numbers of black men are effectively taken out of the labor market by imprisonment. As Western and Pettit (2002) explained, when we take into account the incarcerated population, less than a third of black male high school dropouts are employed.

One in three black men born in the twenty-first century can expect to spend time in prison during his lifetime (Mauer and King 2007). While incarcerated, people are either unemployed or employed at extremely low wages, as the minimum wage does not apply to prison labor. Moreover, the effects of imprisonment endure after incarceration. People who spend time in prison often have trouble finding work once released because of the stigma of a criminal record (Pager 2007). They also are likely to earn less than people who have not been to prison, as their time in prison takes them out of the labor market, rendering them incapable of gaining work experience during this time. In a recent study,

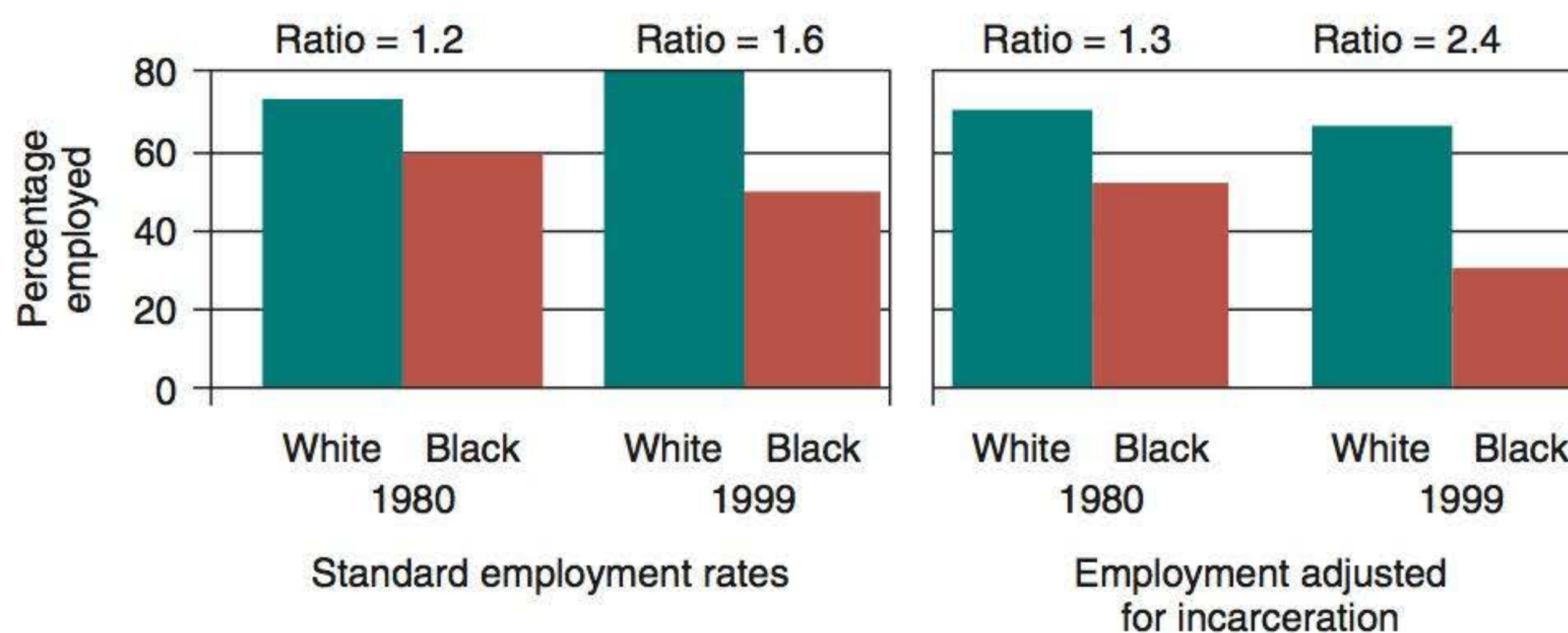


FIGURE 9-6.
Employment Percentages
of Male High School Drop-
outs, Aged 22 to 30, by Race
and Education History,
1980 and 1999

Source: Western and Pettit (2002).

Lyons and Pettit (2011) explored how spending time in prison affects wage trajectories for black and white men. They found that there was relatively little difference between black and white men's wage growth prior to incarceration, but that after incarceration, black men's wages grew at a 21 percent slower rate than the wages of their white counterparts.

SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS FOR INCOME AND LABOR MARKET INEQUALITY

human capital

Educational attainment, skills, and job experience.

One question that arises from these disparities is whether the gaps in earnings and employment are due to differences in human capital, labor market discrimination, or other factors. **Human capital** refers to educational attainment, skills, and job experience. Scholars who study labor market disparities often measure earnings gaps while taking into account human capital differences. The idea is that an individual's earnings should be based on his or her qualifications. If disparities remain once we take into account human capital differences, we can argue that labor market discrimination plays a role in the earnings gap. Studies of the earnings gap consistently show that about 10 to 20 percent of this gap cannot be explained by human capital differences. Sociologists often consider the unexplained gap to be an indicator of labor market discrimination (Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009).

The existence of an earnings gap tells us that labor market discrimination is likely at play. Field research or audit studies provide further evidence of labor market discrimination, particularly in terms of hiring. In these studies (e.g., Pager et al. 2009), researchers send out people with similar qualifications but different racial and ethnic identities to apply for existing jobs to find out if racial identity plays a role in employers' hiring decisions.

The lower earnings of African Americans and Latinos can be attributed in part to individual factors such as discrimination and lower levels of human capital. But lower earnings are also attributable to structural factors such as changes in the labor market. During the 1980s, for example, wages increased for high-skilled jobs, government sector work declined, many unionized jobs went overseas, and part-time and temporary work rose. These structural changes affected labor market disparities. Of course, individual and structural factors also work together. For example, blacks have, on average, lower educational attainment than Asian Americans. This disparity has disadvantaged blacks in recent years because of the diminished opportunities for low-skill work that has resulted from outsourcing. This section considers both individual-level and structural explanations for labor market inequality.

Individual-Level Explanations

One way to explain the earnings gap among different racial groups in the United States is on an individual level. Some scholars argue that the earnings gap is due to individual human capital differences—for example, if Asian Americans have higher levels of education than blacks, we can expect them to have higher incomes.

In 2012, 84 percent of Asians, 69 percent of Latinos, 67 percent of whites, and 63 percent of blacks who graduated from high school immediately enrolled in college (Fry and Taylor 2013). Higher levels of education among Asians are part of the reason they earn more than other racial groups. But to what extent does educational attainment explain overall patterns of income inequality?

Sociologists Moshe Semyonov and Noah Lewin-Epstein (2009) examined the earnings gap between black men and white men by looking at individual-level characteristics such as age, marital status, immigrant status, region of residence, education, hours worked, and occupation. Using census data between 1960 and 2000 to examine how inequalities have changed over time, they found that even when we take all of these characteristics into consideration, black men continue to have an earnings disadvantage. Nevertheless, this disadvantage has lessened over time among men with similar occupational and social statuses. In 1960, black men had an earnings penalty of 25 percent (meaning they earned 25 percent less than their white counterparts with similar backgrounds). This penalty declined to 10 percent in 1980 and was down to 4.2 percent in 2000. By 2000, black men earned 4 percent less than white men with similar backgrounds. For Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein, human capital and other individual-level characteristics explain most, but not all, of the earnings gap between white and black men. When differences in earnings cannot be explained fully by workers' labor market characteristics, many scholars argue that the disadvantage can be explained by discrimination.

Racial discrimination in the labor market occurs when racial status plays a role in an employer's decision to deny a person a job, promotion, or raise.



▲ Bus drivers in Washington, D.C., have one of the few unionized jobs left in the country.



Latina Professionals as Racialized Tokens: Lisa's Story

Glenda Flores argues that Latina professionals are “racialized tokens.” When they are numerical minorities in white-collar occupations, they experience a series of uncomfortable situations rooted in racial conflict. Flores’s work on Latina doctors introduces us to Lisa, a thirty-four-year-old family medicine physician born in El Salvador. Lisa moved to the United States with her family as an infant and settled in the Pico Union District in downtown Los Angeles.

Lisa explained that her college-educated, white-collar parents experienced downward mobility upon arrival. As undocumented immigrants, they found work in the garment industry. Lisa overcame obstacles associated with her parents’ low socioeconomic status and earned her medical degree from the University of California at Davis.

Despite experiencing intergenerational upward mobility and securing a prestigious profession that paid over \$100,000 a year, Lisa shared that she frequently experienced gendered and racial inequities in her interactions with colleagues and patients, both co-ethnics and non-Latinos. In an interview, Lisa recounted a situation with a white physician:

I ended up doing way more [work] than that [white] doctor. That doctor slowed me down because his Spanish was broken and he did not know anything about medical Spanish, which I have been studying. So they were using me to interpret [for him] and I was really mad . . . I’m like “why am I doing that?” . . . I am okay doing it but it was just funny that [another] Latino [doctor], a Peruvian guy, was putting him [the white doctor] on a pedestal because he is male, white, and older and I am the opposite.

Later, Lisa, who had a very slight accent indicative of a native Spanish speaker, explained how racial/ethnic inequality influenced how patients interacted with her during office visits:

There was an intern who was an Asian [male] and had seen this patient. I am understanding it was [an instance rooted in] race because this is what the [white] patient said. . . . I am talking [to the patient] in English and he is like “I don’t understand you. Bring back the Asian doctor. I don’t understand you.” [I say] “Sir, I am speaking English!” He says, “no but I don’t understand your English.” . . . the Caucasian [patients] are the ones that [it has happened with] at least in two situations. It is more race and language because I do have an accent and I realize that but I can communicate.



While Lisa felt she was culturally competent to aid patients of various social and economic backgrounds, she was aware that her race/ethnicity and gender meant that both physicians and patients undermined her medical expertise, favoring medical interns that held a lesser rank or less competent white doctors over her.

White women also face gender discrimination in male-dominated jobs. However, the experience is different for professional Latinas who encounter gendered racism. Inequality in the professions manifests itself in different ways, and bilingual Latinas working in the “token” context often find themselves doing additional work—such as translations—that others performing the same job are not asked to do.

Source: Glenda Flores, University of California at Irvine.

A survey conducted in 2001 found that more than 33 percent of blacks and nearly 20 percent of Latinos believed they had experienced labor market discrimination (Schiller 2004). Other studies have found that employers admit they are hesitant to hire black workers (Pager and Shepherd 2008).

One way of measuring labor market discrimination is to use statistics to identify systematic disparities between different groups. For example, if we compare the earnings of thirty-five-year-old college-educated white men to similarly situated black men and find a disparity, we can conclude that labor market discrimination plays a role in the earnings disparity. As previously mentioned, another method for uncovering discrimination involves the use of field experiments or audit studies in which researchers send equally qualified individuals out to apply for jobs and calculate the extent to which race or ethnicity affects employers’ hiring practices. Each of these methodologies has revealed labor market discrimination (Pager and Shepherd 2008).

Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan (2004) conducted an extensive audit study to find out if employers discriminate against African Americans. They created four résumés—two high-skill and two low-skill—to send to over 1,300 job ads in Chicago and Boston. To isolate the effect they were studying, they randomly assigned either an African American-sounding name (such as Lakisha Washington or Jamal Jones) or a white-sounding name (such as Emily Walsh or Greg Baker) to each résumé. They found that applicants with white-sounding names needed to send out about ten résumés to get a callback, whereas applicants with African American-sounding names needed to send about fifteen. This audit study shows that African Americans have a harder time securing interviews that lead to employment than whites

implicit bias Unreasoned judgmental inclinations that operate without our conscious awareness.

categorical exclusion A mechanism of labor market discrimination in which an applicant is not given an opportunity to interview for a job because of his or her race.

shifting standards A mechanism of labor market discrimination in which job applicants of different races receive different responses despite similar levels of experience.

in part because employers often prefer white employees. This preference may reflect conscious or unconscious bias.

Researchers who study **implicit bias** explain that we all have biases at a subconscious level. Owing to stereotypes, for example, a potential employer may exhibit bias in evaluating the same résumé from “Lakisha Washington” versus “Emily Walsh” without even being aware.

A clear example of implicit bias comes from a study of lawyers. A group of researchers crafted a fictitious legal research memo and asked sixty law firm partners to evaluate the memo. The memo contained seven deliberate spelling and grammatical errors. The partners (which included twenty-three women, thirty-seven men, twenty-one racial/ethnic minorities, and thirty-nine Caucasians) all received the same memo. However, half were told the author was black, and the other half were told the author was white. The partners were asked to find the errors in the memo. Evaluators who were told that the author was black found more of the embedded errors and rated the memo as lower quality than did those partners who were told the author was white. Specifically, they found an average of 2.9 spelling or grammar errors in the memo allegedly written by the white attorney, as compared with 5.8 spelling/grammar errors in the one supposedly written by the black attorney. The author of the study explains: “we see more errors when we expect to see errors, and we see fewer errors when we do not expect to see errors” (Reeves 2014, 6). The evaluators were not people who think of themselves as racist or who hold a low opinion of African Americans. Instead, their implicit biases were activated, leading them to find more errors when they thought the author of the memo was black. Understanding these biases helps us to understand some ways that African Americans are disadvantaged in the labor market.

The Research Focus sidebar in this section discusses a 2004 study of discrimination in the labor market. A more recent audit study by economists Amanda Agan and Sonja Starr (2016) shows that black applicants continue to face discrimination in the entry-level job market.

Structural Explanations

Some scholars have looked beyond individuals to explain the disparities between social groups in terms of larger structures. One prominent explanation for earnings disparities between black and white men points to the changing nature of U.S. cities, where the decline in manufacturing has meant the disappearance of work. This shift in the labor market has affected black men in particular because of their concentration in the manufacturing sectors of many major cities.

research focus

Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market

In 2004, the New York Hiring Discrimination Study sent out two teams of men, each of which included a white, a Latino, and a black job tester, all between twenty-two and twenty-six years of age and of similar height. They were given invented résumés presenting the applicants as high school graduates with steady work experience. The men applied for 171 entry-level jobs in the retail and food industries that were listed in the classifieds. The white testers received a callback or job offer 31.0 percent of the time, the Latino testers 25.2 percent of the time, and the black testers only 15.2 percent of the time. These findings show that black job applicants have to search, on average, twice as long as white job applicants to secure entry-level employment.

The study then sent out another team of testers, this time telling the white applicant to indicate that he had a prior drug conviction. In this experiment, whites with criminal records received positive responses 17.2 percent of the time, compared with 15 percent for the Latinos with no criminal record and 13 percent for blacks with no record. In this round, whites with criminal convictions were still slightly more likely than blacks without convictions to have a chance of securing employment.

The next step in the study involved determining the mechanisms through which this form of labor market discrimination occurred. The authors found three mechanisms: categorical exclusion, shifting standards, and race-based job channeling.

- **Categorical exclusion** occurred when the applicant was not given an opportunity to interview for a job because of his race. One example was when the three testers applied for the same job and the hiring manager dismissed the black tester and then asked the white and Latino testers to come back the next day at 5 p.m. to start work.
- **Shifting standards** occurred when black, white, and Latino testers received different responses despite similar levels of experience. In one case, the three testers applied for a line cook position. None of them reported any kitchen experience. The white and Latino testers were told they could come in for a trial period, whereas the hiring manager told the black tester that the restaurant was only looking for experienced line cooks. The black tester was not given a chance.

(continued)

- **Race-based job channeling** occurred when applicants were told they should apply for a different job opening. For example, the three testers applied for a sales position in a lighting store. The white and Latino testers were allowed to apply for the position, but the hiring manager told the black tester that he should apply for the stock boy position instead. Channeling occurred in twenty-three cases. In most cases, the black and Latino applicants were channeled into positions that required less customer contact—for example, from server to busboy or from sales to stocking.

This study reveals persistent discrimination in hiring practices, even given an ideal scenario in which articulate, clean-cut young men posed as high school graduates with some work experience. In real-world situations, there may be even more discrimination and unequal job opportunities.

For Discussion

Why do you think employers were less likely to call black and Latino job applicants in for an interview?

Why do you think employers suggested that black testers apply for stock boy positions instead of sales positions?

Have you seen evidence of similar discriminatory patterns in your experience?

Source: Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009.

race-based job channeling A mechanism of labor market discrimination in which similarly qualified applicants of different races are told they should apply for job openings at different levels.

deindustrialization The shift from a manufacturing to a service economy.

Deindustrialization, the shift from a manufacturing to a service economy, has affected working-class people in all racial and ethnic groups in the United States. After World War II, working families in the United States experienced newfound prosperity as the U.S. economy grew rapidly with the production of automobiles and steel. These manufacturing jobs often paid well and came with benefits. Mostly men worked in these jobs, and many earned a family wage—an income sufficient to support their wives and children (Milkman 1997; Sugrue 2014). Between 1950 and 1960, average incomes in the United States increased steadily. However, these increases began to level off, and by the 1970s, incomes for the working poor had stopped increasing. The average income for people with less than a high school diploma actually decreased from about \$30,000 in 1967 to about \$25,000 in 2014 (in constant 2014 dollars; Cahalan and Perna 2016).

One reason for the decreases in the average pay for low-skilled workers is deindustrialization. In 1950, 40 percent of all jobs involved the production of goods. By 1997, less than 20 percent of all jobs were goods-producing (see Figure 9-7). Whereas, historically, manufacturing jobs often offered stable employment and a family wage, service-sector jobs are often temporary and part time, and offer lower wages. Between 1979 and 1985, the United States lost 10 percent of its manufacturing jobs. These losses were concentrated in certain geographical areas, thereby amplifying their localized effects. The Midwest lost over a million jobs and the Northeast lost 800,000. By contrast, the West gained 53,000 manufacturing jobs (Sassen 1989). Detroit was one of the cities hit hardest by global economic restructuring: it lost 70 percent of its manufacturing jobs between 1969 and 1989. By the end of the 1980s, over a third of all African Americans in Detroit lived in poverty, as did half of Detroit's African American children (Kodras 1997).

The decline in manufacturing was also accompanied by a decline in unionized jobs: In 1954, 35 percent of the nation's workforce was unionized. By the early 1980s, this figure had dropped to 20 percent. And, by 2008, the unionization rate was 8 percent (Thompson 2010). As unionized workers tend to earn more, the decline in unions has affected wage inequality (Morris and Western 1999).

In the 1950s, many urban African American families lived in poverty, but they were among the working poor, as described in the opening excerpt of this chapter. For example, in 1960, 69 percent of men over the age of fourteen who lived in the Black Belt region of the city of Chicago were regularly employed. By 1990, only 37 percent of men sixteen or over were regularly employed (Wilson 1996). This figure is even smaller if we take into account the incarcerated population, as discussed previously.

Up until the 1980s, many black men were employed in manufacturing jobs, which provided benefits and a family wage, permitting families to attain comfortable standards of living. Once these factories began to close, these comfortable lifestyles went with them. Black men were the hardest hit by this

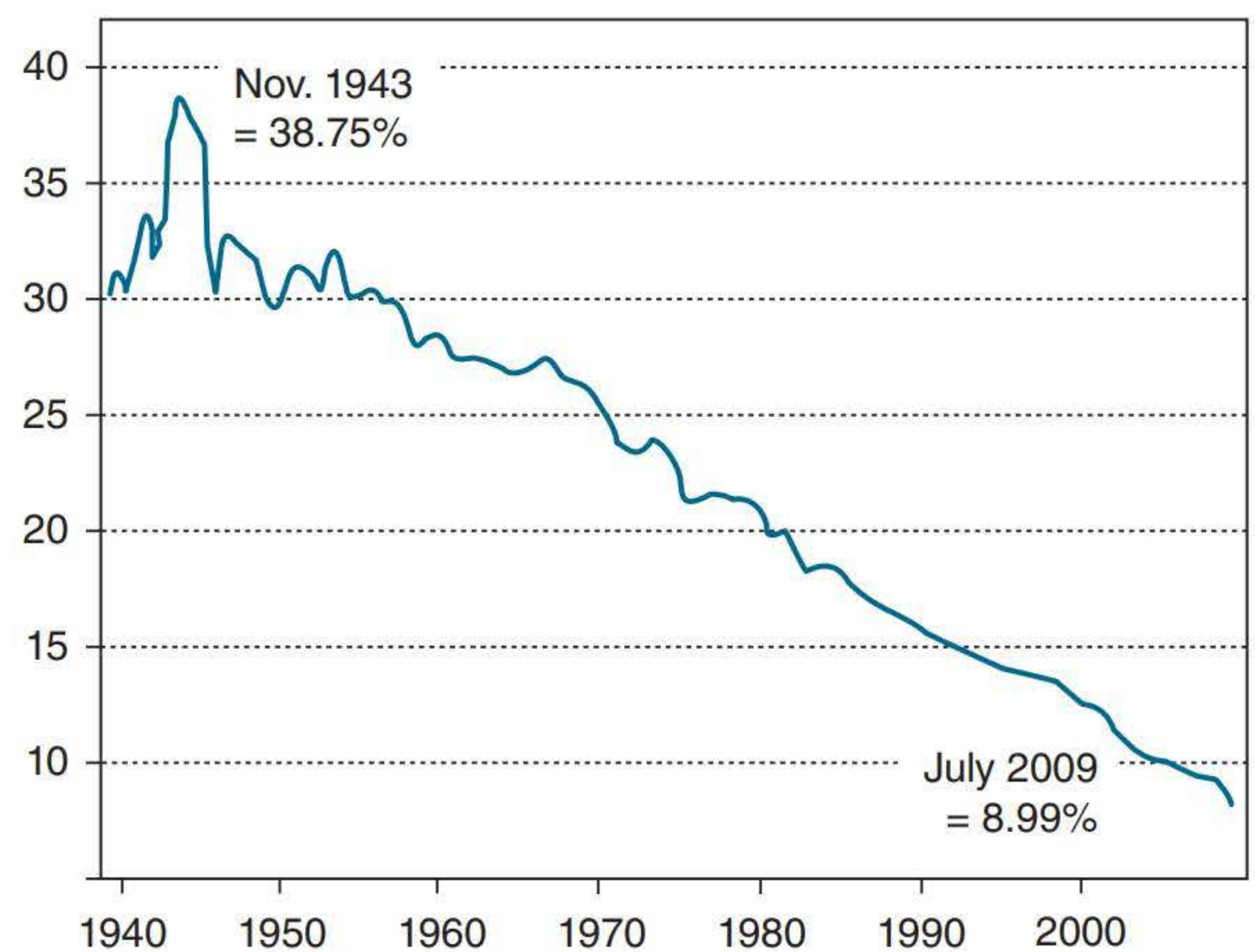


FIGURE 9-7.
Percentage of U.S. Labor Force in Manufacturing, 1939–2014

Source: BLS (2015).

economic restructuring: Oliver and Shapiro (2006, 26) write that “from 1979 to 1984 one-half of black males in durable-goods manufacturing in five Great Lakes cities lost their jobs.”

When the economic crisis hit Detroit and other cities, white residents often fled, whereas African American residents rarely had this option. As a result, by the end of the 1980s, urban areas were much less white and much more impoverished than they had been a decade earlier. The unemployment rates of African American men in these urban areas rose to extraordinarily high rates—by 1990, only 37 percent of males sixteen or over who lived in the Black Belt in Chicago were regularly employed (Wilson 1996).

African American men were hit particularly hard by deindustrialization in Detroit. This is due in part to the fact that, in 1970, 94 percent of employed black men in Detroit had blue-collar jobs, the sector that experienced the greatest decline (Sugrue 2014). This deindustrialization trend that started in the 1950s continued for five decades: three out of four production jobs disappeared from Detroit between 1972 and 1992 (Boyle 2001). As the availability of manufacturing jobs declined, black men began to have difficulty finding work (Farley, Danziger, and Hozer 2000).

An understanding of the prevalence of black unemployment in deindustrializing urban areas such as Detroit and Chicago is aided by an examination of both the skills mismatch and the spatial mismatch that deindustrialization has created. The **skills mismatch hypothesis** suggests that many African American men in particular often do not have the skills required to secure work in the current economy. Although there has been growth in employment sectors that require a college degree, many African American men do not have the qualifications for these jobs.

The **spatial mismatch hypothesis** sheds further light on these trends, as it explains that African American families have been excluded from buying homes in the suburbs where much of the job growth has occurred, thereby creating a disconnect between where African Americans live and where the jobs are concentrated. Notably, in 1990, 50 percent of employed blacks who lived in the city of Detroit commuted to the suburbs for work. The “spatial mismatch” is not due to African Americans’ refusal to move to white neighborhoods. Instead, as Thomas Sugrue (2014) argues, in the 1940s and 1950s, white Detroiters forced African American residents to stay in ghettoized areas by terrorizing black families through cross burning and other intimidation tactics when they attempted to move into white neighborhoods. As Detroit’s city center was being depleted of jobs, black families were forced to stay in these hollowed-out areas due to white terror as well as

skills mismatch hypothesis

The hypothesis that African American men in particular often do not have the skills required to secure work in the current economy.

spatial mismatch hypothesis

Hypothesis that African American families have been excluded from buying homes in the suburbs where much of the job growth has occurred, thereby creating a disconnect between where African Americans live and where the jobs are concentrated.

state policies that excluded black people from desirable areas of Detroit and the outlying suburbs.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN EMPLOYMENT

In a profit-based economic system, wages should be determined by competition, and the most qualified people should get the available jobs. If there are lots of people with a certain skill set, wages will be lower for that job. In contrast, if there are fewer people with the requisite skills, then wages should be higher. However, prior to the civil rights era, employers practiced overt discrimination: they refused to hire African Americans and paid them less than whites when they did hire them.

Edna Bonacich (1976) explains that historic disparities between blacks and whites are due to a **split labor market**, which refers to a difference in the price of labor for two or more groups of laborers. For example, in 1927 in Virginia, the average daily pay rate for white bricklayers was \$11.00, whereas it was \$9.60 for blacks. Similarly, white cement workers earned an average of \$6.33 per day, whereas blacks earned an average of \$4.42. While many companies paid African Americans less, others refused to hire them at all. This seems somewhat illogical, as we would expect employers to hire the lowest-paid workers they could find. However, racial discrimination is often not based on logic.

One story from the late 1950s is that of Thomas Bailey, a skilled brickmason who had trouble finding steady work. When he applied for jobs, foremen often told him that he had to be a member of a union to work there. Yet, when he applied for membership in the union, the business agent told him he could only be a member if he was actively working. Bailey, an African American, was caught in a bind. He had trouble getting steady work because the unions often refused to allow black men to join, and the unions controlled access to construction employment. When this issue came to the attention of local civil rights leaders, they pressured the union to allow Bailey to join. He eventually was let in but faced intimidation by other union members. Because of the widespread nature of cases like Bailey's, national leaders began to push for more systemic changes. The construction industry was one of the first targets because it relied on federal contracts. The federal government had the power to require these companies to obey antidiscrimination laws as a condition of their contracts (Golland 2011).

One of the proposed solutions to labor market discrimination came to be known as *affirmative action*. This term was first used in 1935 in the National Labor Relations Act, which specified that employers could not discriminate against union members or organizers. If they did, they would have to take

split labor market A difference in the price of labor for two or more groups of laborers.

affirmative action to remedy the effects of that discrimination (Skrentny 1996). Three decades later, President Lyndon Johnson used the term in Executive Order 11246 (1965). In this order, Johnson called for federal contractors to “take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment without regard to their race, color, religion, sex or national origin.”

Because of this order and other civil rights legislation and rules, by the 1960s, federal contractors had to sign pre-award affirmative action agreements ensuring that contractors would actively recruit a diverse workforce to complete the contract. Contractors also had to agree to sponsor nonwhite workers for apprenticeships and training. In this way, in towns and cities across the nation, African Americans and Latinos were able to secure employment in what had been a primarily white employment sector (Golland 2011).

Today, affirmative action refers to policies and procedures designed to combat ongoing discrimination in the workplace and in schools, as we began to discuss in Chapter Eight. Affirmative action policies aim to keep discrimination from occurring by requiring employers to be proactive in their attempts to diversify their workforce. In addition, affirmative action policies require employers to be conscious of the racial and ethnic makeup of their employees to ensure a more diverse workforce (Skrentny 1996). The overarching goal of affirmative action in employment is to decrease the influence of racial discrimination on the employment prospects of people of color.

Government orders for contractors are one of four kinds of affirmative action in the United States:

1. Government orders regulating government contractors and subcontractors
2. Regulations requiring affirmative action by public employers
3. Court orders based on antidiscrimination law
4. Employers' voluntary human resources policies

Since 1965, companies that do business with the federal government have been required to meet affirmative action requirements. The U.S. Department of Labor website (n.d.) indicates that “for federal contractors and subcontractors, affirmative action must be taken by covered employers to recruit and advance qualified minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and covered veterans. Affirmative actions include training programs, outreach efforts, and other positive steps.” In other words, any company that works with the federal government has to show it is taking positive steps to maintain or increase

the diversity of its workforce. One example is the promotion of broad recruitment strategies: posting a job advertisement for at least 30 days, advertising in a range of venues, and using objective evaluation criteria to review the applicants.

In 1972, the Equal Opportunity Act created a provision that mandated that employers found guilty of discrimination must implement affirmative action policies. Since 1965, hundreds of employers have implemented affirmative action voluntarily in their hiring and promotion strategies. Nevertheless, despite fifty years of affirmative action, African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans continue to experience labor market discrimination.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Given the unequal conditions of the formal labor market, many racial and ethnic minorities turn to self-employment as a means to achieve the American Dream and to be their own boss. Self-employment rates vary significantly among groups. In 2010, 13.5 percent of white men were self-employed, compared with 6.2 percent of African Americans, 34 percent of Israelis, 27 percent of Koreans, 10 percent of Mexicans, and 9 percent of Dominicans. Most sociologists explain these disparities in self-employment rates by pointing to differences in social and ethnic networks and human capital (Portes and Yiu 2013).

The self-employment strategy has worked better for some groups than for others. Chinese and Cuban small-business owners, for example, tend to do better than their counterparts who are not self-employed. However, African American, Korean, and Mexican small-business owners often experience severe setbacks. The work of both Adia Harvey Wingfield (2008) and Zulema Valdez (2008a, 2011) adds complexity to traditional understandings of the **ethnic enclave economy**, which refers to clusters of small businesses that primarily serve people of the same ethnicity and work to facilitate the success of co-ethnics. The ethnic enclave economy has helped immigrants of certain national origins, such as Cubans, attain economic success in the United States. According to this framework, immigrants such as the Chinese, Cubans, Greeks, and Koreans have attained success in small-business ownership because of their high human capital, social networks, and close-knit ethnic communities. However, both Harvey Wingfield and Zulema Valdez have criticized scholarship that focuses solely on ethnicity and culture. They argue that it is critical to understand how

ethnic enclave economy

Clusters of small businesses that primarily serve people of the same ethnicity and work to facilitate the success of co-ethnics.

racial enclave economy

An economy in which a business's success is both shaped and limited by the racial group membership of the business owner.

embedded market

A market economy embedded within interlocking systems of oppression and privilege.

race, class, and gender—in addition to ethnicity and culture—play a role in the success of small businesses.

Harvey Wingfield (2008) draws on the concept of a **racial enclave economy**, in which a business's success is both shaped and limited by the racial group membership of the business owner. She uses the example of black female owners of hair salons to elaborate on this concept. Valdez (2011) draws from interviews with restaurant owners of different ethnic origins to explain how race, class, and gender play a role in shaping the success of local businesses. She uses the concept of an **embedded market**—a market economy embedded within interlocking systems of oppression and privilege, such as “capitalism, patriarchy, and White supremacy”—to explain disparities in the success of small businesses (37). These systems of oppression affect an individual's possibilities for success as an entrepreneur. Whereas previous scholarship on ethnic enclaves might presume that Mexicans have similar options in the restaurant industry, Valdez explains that an upper-class male Mexican may be able to open a highly profitable Italian restaurant in a wealthy neighborhood, whereas a poor female Mexican may be limited to opening a taqueria in the barrio.

Valdez (2008b) conducted a national study in which she looked at four groups of entrepreneurs: white, Korean, Mexican, and black men. She found

GLOBAL VIEW

Racial Discrimination in Australia

Alison Booth and her colleagues conducted a large-scale audit study to measure labor market discrimination against immigrants and indigenous people in Australia, where one-fourth of the population is foreign-born. Their study included a comparison of labor market options for Anglo-Saxon Australians (the majority group) with those for indigenous Australians and immigrants from Italy, China, and the Middle East.

To measure discrimination, they sent 4,000 fictitious job applications out for entry-level jobs, in which they varied only the apparent ethnicity of the applicant by changing the names. They applied for jobs in restaurants, data entry, customer service, and sales in Australia's three largest cities: Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane. For each advertised position, they submitted four applications, each from a different ethnic group.

The results showed that the mean callback rate for Anglo-Saxons was 35 percent. Applications with an Italian-sounding name received responses 32 percent of the time, with only a small statistically significant difference. The differences were starker for the other groups: indigenous applicants obtained an interview 26 percent of the time, Chinese applicants 21 percent, and Middle Easterners 22 percent.

The largest discrepancies were for waitstaff positions: Chinese and Middle Eastern applicants had to fill out twice as many applications to get as many interviews as an Anglo-Saxon applicant. There was less discrimination in data entry jobs, showing that ethnicity is most important in positions in which employees have to deal directly with customers.

Source: Booth, Leigh, and Varganova 2010.

that 40 percent of the white owners earned over \$75,000 a year, as did 25 percent of the Koreans, 20 percent of the Mexicans, and 17 percent of the black business owners. In contrast, nearly half of the black business owners earned less than \$25,000 a year, as did 41 percent of the Mexicans, 33 percent of the Koreans, and 24 percent of the white male business owners. Her study found that this disparity can be explained in part by the fact that Korean and white small business owners are more likely to have higher educational levels than the Mexican and black business owners. Black and Mexican business owners with higher levels of education and more access to bank loans are able to do much better with their businesses. Nevertheless, as Harvey Wingfield (2008) notes, some African American women without college educations are able to do well for themselves in certain racial enclave economies, such as hair salons. Harvey Wingfield, however, further points out that the enclave places limits on the success of black female hair salon owners: they are able to do well, but their profits tend to plateau after about five years.

The 2015 *State of Women-Owned Businesses Report* emphasizes that there has been substantial growth in the number of women-owned minority businesses over the past twenty years. However, it also shows that revenues from minority-owned businesses continue to lag behind those of white-owned businesses. The average revenue for businesses owned by black women in 2015, for example, was just \$39,893, compared with an average of \$155,477 for all women-owned firms (*The State of Women-Owned Businesses Report*, 2015, 7). As shown in Figure 9-8, whites own 79.3 percent of all firms but take in 90.7 percent of all revenue. In contrast, African Americans own 9.4 percent of firms but take in only 1.3 percent of all revenue.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Despite fifty years of affirmative action and scores of antidiscrimination laws and lawsuits, nonwhites continue to be disadvantaged in the labor market. There are many reasons for this discrimination.

One reason is that it is difficult, or even impossible, to simply legislate away discrimination. Employers may be discriminating against nonwhites and women unconsciously. As mentioned in Chapter Three, racial ideologies are

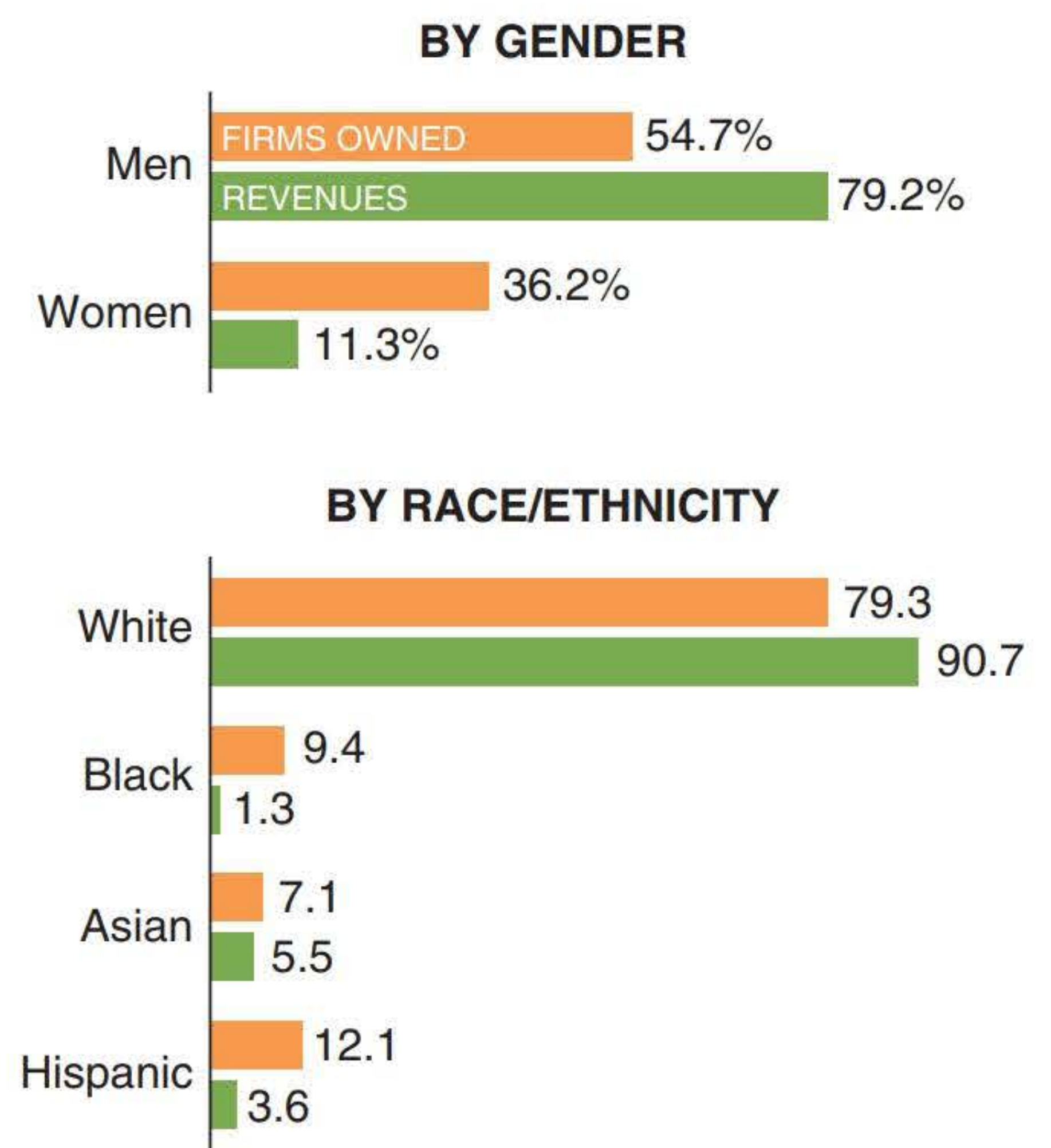


FIGURE 9-8.
Share of Business Revenue by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Note: Among those firms whose ownership can be classified by gender and race/ethnicity. Hispanics/Latinos can be of any race; white, black, and Asian figures include Hispanics/Latinos.

Source: Desilver (2015).

often ingrained in our individual perceptions. A white hiring manager may not be aware that he thinks that a white man is a “natural leader” because of entrenched stereotypes and implicit biases. He also may not realize that his presumptions that a black man is irresponsible or a Latina is incapable of being professional are based on those individuals’ race or ethnicity. In many ways, labor market discrimination will not disappear until racial stereotypes go away.

Another set of reasons for the earnings gap is structural: growth in certain industries and contraction in others are due to global forces that are beyond the control of a single government. Nevertheless, a government can provide training programs to get people up to speed and to work in emerging fields. This is an example of a race-neutral program that may help reduce racial disparities.

A related reason for this gap is that the labor market and the small-business market are structured by deeply entrenched inequalities, patriarchy, and racial divisions. Racial segregation in housing and schools, for example, leads to racially segregated social networks, which themselves reproduce preexisting inequalities. We will learn more about the interlocking nature of different systems of inequality in Chapter Ten, which focuses on structural racism. As the United States becomes increasingly unequal, it is critical to work toward ameliorating overall inequality while striving to reduce disparities among racial groups.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

Gini coefficient 252

earnings gap 254

wage gap 254

underemployment 259

human capital 262

implicit bias 266

categorical exclusion 266

shifting standards 266

race-based job channeling 268

deindustrialization 268

skills mismatch hypothesis 270

spatial mismatch hypothesis 270

split labor market 271

ethnic enclave economy 273

racial enclave economy 274

embedded market 274

9.1 What is the extent of income inequality, and how does it vary by race, ethnicity, and gender? (pp. 250–254)

- Overall income inequality in the United States is at a historic high. This inequality is exacerbated when we take racial, ethnic, and gender disparities into account.

Review

- » How has inequality changed over the course of the twentieth century?
- » How unequal is the United States compared with other countries?
- » What is the difference between the wage gap and the earnings gap?

Critical Thinking

- » How do the wage and earnings gaps represent different facets of inequality?
- » Why has earnings inequality increased over the past fifty years?

9.2 What are some dimensions of labor market inequality? (pp. 254–262)

- A complete understanding of racial disparities in the labor market requires a consideration of gender, national-origin differences, incarceration rates, and unemployment rates.

Review

- » Why is it important to take human capital into account when measuring earnings disparities?
- » How do racism and sexism operate differently in the labor market?

Critical Thinking

- » Of the explanations provided, which do you find most convincing for explaining the earnings disparities between black men and white men? Why?

9.3 How do sociologists explain labor market inequality? (pp. 262–271)

- Sociologists offer various explanations for labor market disparities, ranging from human capital disparities to employer discrimination and structural changes in the overall economy.

Review

- » To what extent are Asians advantaged or disadvantaged in the U.S. labor market?
- » How do the individual-level explanations for labor market disparities differ from the structural explanations? To what extent could these explanations work together?

Critical Thinking

- » Why does the author argue that the incarcerated population should be included in counts of the unemployed?
- » Are audit studies a useful way to measure discrimination? Why or why not? What are the weaknesses and strengths of this approach?
- » Why is it important to take into account gender when studying racial inequality?

9.4 Can affirmative action be an appropriate remedy for labor market discrimination? (pp. 271–273)

- Few employers have affirmative action policies in place. Those that do are required to take positive steps to ensure that their company does not practice racial discrimination and has a diverse workforce that reflects the working-age population of the United States.

Review

- » How has affirmative action been implemented in the United States?

Critical Thinking

- » What strategies do you think could be implemented to reduce the earnings penalty for nonwhite workers?

9.5 What is the relationship between self-employment and labor market inequality? (pp. 273–275)

- Self-employment and entrepreneurship have worked well for some racial minority groups but not for others.

Review

- » In owning successful small businesses, what are some of the barriers that women and racial minorities face in particular?

Critical Thinking

- » Can people of color avoid discrimination by becoming entrepreneurs? Why or why not?
- » How is an embedded market related to ethnic and racial enclaves? Evaluate how the embedded market affects minority-owned businesses.

Talking about Race

Income inequality has increased overall in the United States since the 1970s: the rich have become richer while the poor have become poorer. Think of ways to use what you have learned in this chapter to talk with people close to you about inequality. What is the relationship between overall inequality and inequality between racial groups? How could a decrease in overall inequality lead to a decrease in racial inequality? Do you think there could be room for interracial solidarity in discussions about income inequality?



The Block. Romare Bearden. 1971. Cut and pasted printed, colored and metallic papers, photostats, graphite, ink marker, gouache, watercolor, and ink on Masonite. 48 x 216 in. (Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY)

Inequality in Housing and Wealth

As You Read

- 10.1** What are the historical reasons for housing and wealth inequalities in the United States?
- 10.2** When and how did residential segregation become a characteristic of U.S. cities?
- 10.3** What is the extent of wealth inequalities today in homeownership and beyond?
- 10.4** What factors are perpetuating and exacerbating wealth inequalities?

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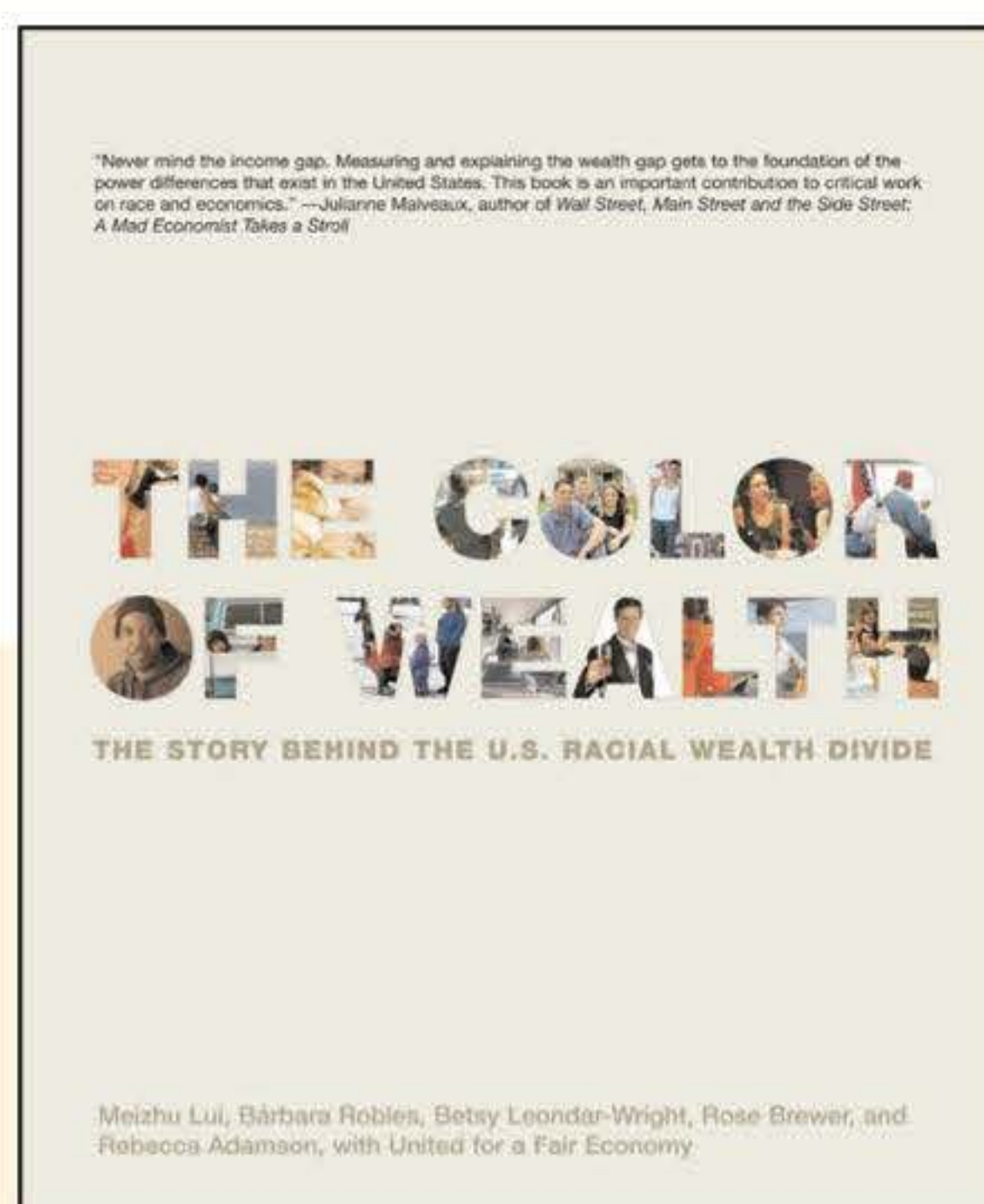
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Inequalities in housing and wealth are deeply rooted in American history. The following excerpt from *The Color of Wealth* gives one example of how historical policies in the United States still reverberate today.

A racially mixed group is gathered in a church basement for a workshop on the racial wealth divide. A trainer from United for a Fair Economy has just presented the facts that a typical white family has about \$121,000 in assets, compared to the typical family of color, which has about \$17,000 in assets.

In response, Ed, a middle-aged white man, raises his hand. “I hear what you are saying—that white people tend to have more money. But I don’t like that what you are implying—that I should feel guilty about it. I swear, everything I have, I worked hard for.”

Ed has a point. He says he studied hard in college, worked hard at every job, and saved steadily until he could buy a home. For the past several years, he and his wife have been contributing to a retirement account.

The trainers ask him who helped him become prosperous, and he says, “No one.” When the discussion turns to affirmative action, he says he opposes racial preferences and government handouts.

But then the trainers lead the group in an exercise in which participants put milestones of their family’s history on a giant timeline on the wall.

It turns out that Ed’s great-great-grandfather got a farm in Nebraska through the Homestead Act—a program only available to whites.

His father, a World War II veteran, got a Veterans Administration mortgage and went to college on the G.I. Bill—programs that black G.I.s couldn’t take full advantage of because of housing and education discrimination. Thanks to those boosts to earlier generations, Ed’s college tuition as well as the down payment on his home could be paid by his parents.

It may be true that he studied hard, worked hard, saved—and so can claim some credit for his assets. But how much of the credit is his? How much is due to public investments in his family?

A Latina woman, Larisa, asks Ed, “What about me? I studied hard, worked hard, and saved just like you. But I didn’t get the same rewards. Doesn’t that mean your money comes partly from your race?” Ed admits that it does.

Source: Lui et al. 2013, 4–5.

In this excerpt, why do you think the trainers in the church workshop thought it was important for Ed to consider his family history? Are the programs his family benefited from—the Homestead Act and the G.I. Bill—government handouts? Are government handouts desirable? Why might it be useful to understand these historical programs?

In this chapter, we will learn about wealth inequality—both overall inequality and inequality among racial and ethnic groups. **Wealth** is the sum total of a person's **assets**—cash in the bank and the value of all property, not only land but houses, cars, stocks and bonds, and retirement savings—minus debt. It is something built up over a lifetime and passed on to the next generation through inheritances.

Wealth inequality in the United States is staggering: 1 percent of Americans own nearly half of the wealth in the country (Norton and Ariely 2011). Despite this tremendous inequality, the idea persists that if you work hard, you will succeed. This ideology is deeply rooted in the American psyche and perpetuated through popular media and folklore. In the story at the start of this chapter, Ed believes he deserves what he has because he has worked hard. Yet many people work hard all of their lives and die with no assets. As writer and activist George Monbiot (2011) put it, “If wealth was the inevitable result of hard work and enterprise, every woman in Africa would be a millionaire.”

wealth The sum total of a person's assets minus debt. Wealth is built up over a lifetime and passed on to the next generation through inheritances.

assets Cash in the bank and the value of all property, not only land but also houses, cars, stocks and bonds, and retirement savings.



◀ If wealth were the inevitable result of hard work, these Berber women would likely be wealthy.

In Chapter Nine, we learned about income inequality. Wealth inequality, as we will see, is both more entrenched and more severe. Most Americans think wealth should be distributed more equally—even as they underestimate the true extent of inequality. Most believe a fair distribution would mean a substantial amount of wealth for the middle class. The reality, however, is very different, with the middle class holding very little or no wealth and the poor having no wealth at all. These proportions—broken down into ideal, perceived, and actual distributions—are shown in Figure 10-1. As this figure shows, the United States is a highly unequal society in terms of wealth and is even more unequal than most of us realize. The top 20 percent of the population controls over 80 percent of the wealth (Norton and Ariely 2011).

When we add race into the equation, the numbers get starker. Black and Latino families in the United States own just nine cents of wealth for each dollar white families own (Pew Research Center 2014). How do we explain such racial disparities in wealth?

As we will see, the reasons for these disparities run deeper than those for income disparities. Wealth inequality is related to income inequality, but wealth and income inequality function differently. The wealth inequality between whites and blacks, for example, is a result of historically embedded inequalities that go back to the time of slavery, the Jim Crow era, and early-twentieth-century housing policies. Today, it is perpetuated and even exacerbated by inequalities in homeownership, college attendance, inheritance, and unemployment rates. Homeownership, often considered the cornerstone of the American Dream, is one of the primary driving forces behind

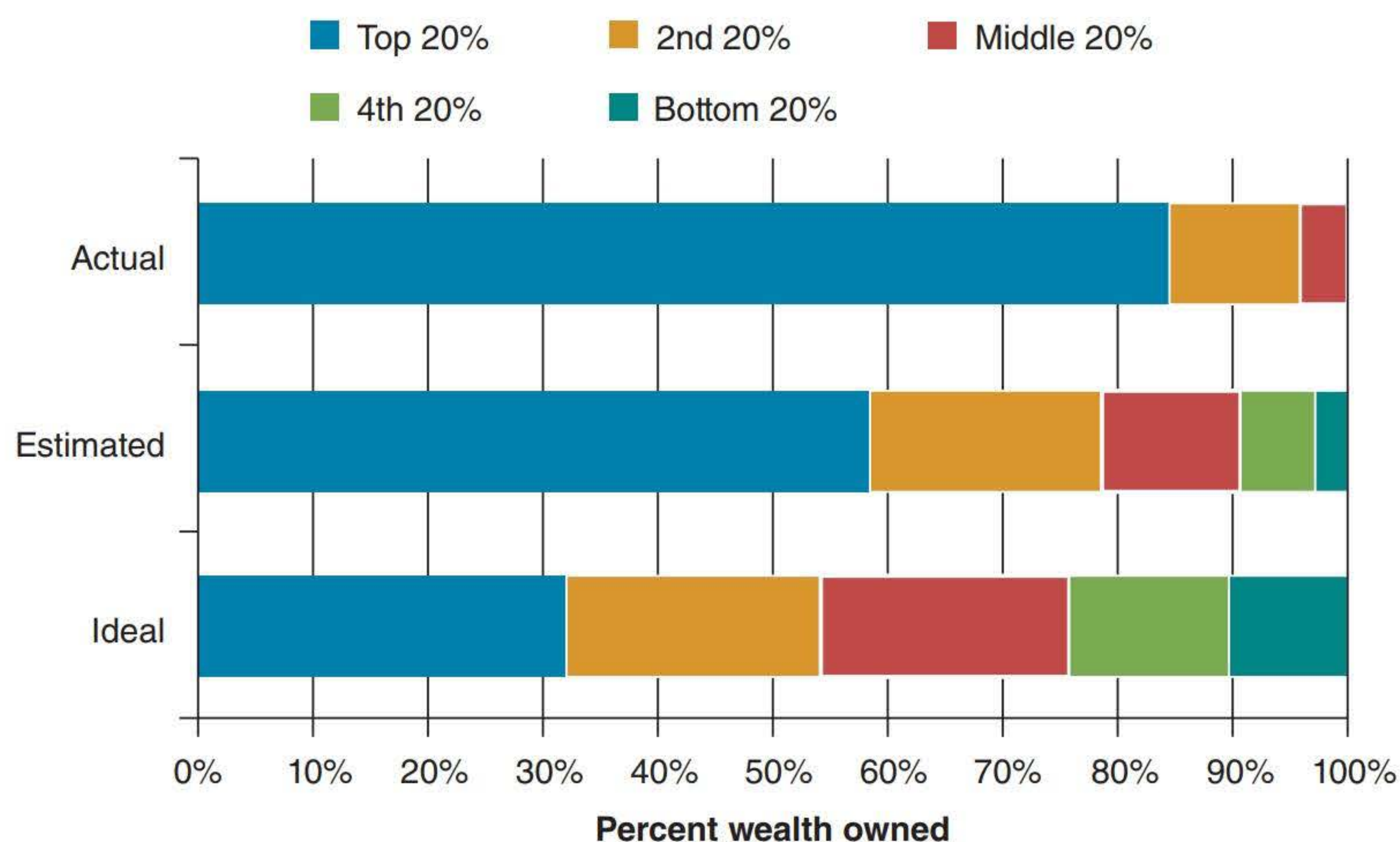


FIGURE 10-1.
Ideal, Perceived, and
Actual Wealth Distribution
in the United States

Source: Norton and Ariely (2011).

racial disparities in wealth. In this chapter, we will take a close look at the historical roots of wealth inequality, as well as contemporary trends, through the lens of race. We will begin with slavery, which set the stage for contemporary racial inequalities.

LAND OWNERSHIP AFTER SLAVERY

At the end of the Civil War, African-descended people who had been enslaved for generations were freed. Slaves had cleared the forests and made the land productive, generating wealth for southern landowners. They ceased to be the property of whites, yet had no property of their own. Enslaved Africans played a tremendous role in creating prosperity for the United States, but their enslavement prevented them from accumulating any wealth.

Slaves were, by definition, unable to own any type of property. With freedom came limited possibilities for land ownership. In 1865, General William Sherman issued Special Field Order No. 15, which set aside land for former slaves in an area that traversed the coastal regions of South Carolina and Florida. Sherman's order specified that black families could settle on no more than forty acres of tillable land. The order, however, stopped short of conferring titles to the land. In less than a year, 40,000 ex-slaves had settled on 400,000 acres of land. The success of this program was short-lived: by the end of 1865, President Johnson had ordered the removal of former slaves from the lands they had settled and returned the lands to their former owners (Darity 2008; Cimbala 1989).

In 1866, former slaves were given another opportunity to acquire land: the Southern Homestead Act (SHA) reopened the door for former slaves to apply for land. The SHA allocated 46 million acres of public lands for homesteading in five southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Both blacks and whites were permitted to apply for this land, much of which was not productive (Canaday, Reback, and Stowe n.d.). By 1900, only one-quarter of southern black farmers owned their land (Oliver and Shapiro 2006). The rest eked out a living working for others or eventually made their way north to seek their fortunes in the cities there.

Although some black Americans found economic opportunities in northern cities, they were not able to reap the same advantages over time as their white counterparts. One of the main reasons for the inability of blacks to build wealth has been the creation of housing segregation within U.S. cities. **Residential segregation** happens when different groups of people are sorted into distinct neighborhoods.

residential segregation The separation of different groups of people into distinct neighborhoods.

RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

Today, most U.S. cities are heavily segregated, yet this was not the case during the nineteenth century. Urban residential segregation in the United States was created in the early twentieth century and has had harmful consequences for the wealth portfolios of black Americans.

The century following emancipation saw dramatic changes in the demographics of the United States. In 1870, 80 percent of black Americans lived in the rural South. By 1970, this figure had reversed: 80 percent of black Americans had come to live in cities, equally divided between the North and the South. During the same period that black Americans were migrating to the North, European immigrants were arriving in U.S. cities.

At first, blacks in urban areas lived in close proximity to whites. Yet between 1900 and 1940, U.S. cities were transformed from having very little residential segregation to having high levels of it. In Kansas City, for example, residential segregation tripled between 1900 and 1930. By 1930, the typical black Chicagoan lived in a neighborhood that was over two-thirds black. In effect, the urban ghetto in the United States was created in the first two decades of the twentieth century (Massey and Denton 1993). How did this happen?

Part of the explanation is that African Americans moved into cities that had previously had small numbers of nonwhites. The rise of segregation, however, was not an organic process: white residents created segregation and ensured that it persisted.

The Creation of Residential Segregation

A combination of three forces led to residential segregation: collective racial violence carried out by whites, practices created and reinforced by the emerging real estate industry, and federal housing programs that were made available almost exclusively to whites.

The first factor that contributed to residential segregation was that throughout the twentieth century, white residents used racial violence to keep blacks out of primarily white neighborhoods (Gotham 2000; Lipsitz 2006). Whites engaged in cross burning and window breaking, and joined organized mobs in nearly every major northern city. There were hundreds of incidents of racial violence intended to prevent blacks from moving into white neighborhoods in Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and other cities. In most cases, these violent actions went unpunished (Sugrue 2008).

The second factor was the creation of **racially restrictive covenants**—contractual agreements that prevent the sale or lease of property within an area to nonwhites—originated and reinforced by the real estate industry.

racially restrictive covenants Contractual agreements that prevent the sale or lease of property within an area to nonwhites.

5. The lot, nor any part thereof, shall not be sold to any persons either of whole or part blood, of the Mongolian, Malay or Ethiopian races, nor shall the same nor any part thereof be rented to persons of such races.

By the 1920s, deeds in nearly every new housing development in the northern United States prevented the ownership or rental of houses in the development by anyone who was not white. From the 1930s until the 1960s, the guidelines of the National Association of Real Estate Boards prevented realtors from selling homes to nonwhites in white areas (Sugrue 2008). Kevin Gotham (2000) argues that the primary motive for these covenants was economic: real estate investors wanted to ensure their profits, and they believed that racially stable and all-white neighborhoods were the most likely to increase in value over time.

In 1948, the Supreme Court declared these covenants unenforceable. And in 1968, the passage of the Fair Housing Act made these covenants illegal. Once covenants became illegal, real estate agents developed new tactics to preserve residential segregation. One of the most common activities was **steering**, in which real estate agents would show homes in white neighborhoods only to whites and homes in black neighborhoods only to blacks. For these and other reasons, over sixty years after the passage of the Fair Housing Act, we still have high levels of residential segregation, which in turn exacerbate wealth inequality.

The final reason for residential segregation is the nature of federal housing programs and policies. We saw in Chapter Two that the early twentieth century was a time when the color line for white immigrants was in flux. Federal housing policies in the 1930s would solidify the line between whites and nonwhites for decades to come.

The **Federal Housing Administration (FHA)** was established in 1934 with the purpose of bolstering the economy and, in particular, the construction industry. The FHA encouraged the building of new homes for people living in crowded tenements in inner cities by creating a new, government-backed mortgage system. Prior to the creation of the FHA, people had to come up with as much as half of the value of a home before purchasing it. The FHA created the

< Deed from 1929 noting restrictions on renting or selling a home to non whites in Seattle.

steering A practice by which real estate agents show homes in white neighborhoods only to whites and homes in black neighborhoods only to blacks.

Federal Housing Administration (FHA)

Government agency established in 1934 with the purpose of bolstering the economy and, in particular, the construction industry.



▲ A sign in the integrated Long Island community of Lakeview, New York, in 1962 reads: “Negroes! This community could become another ghetto. You owe it to your ‘family’ to buy in another community.”

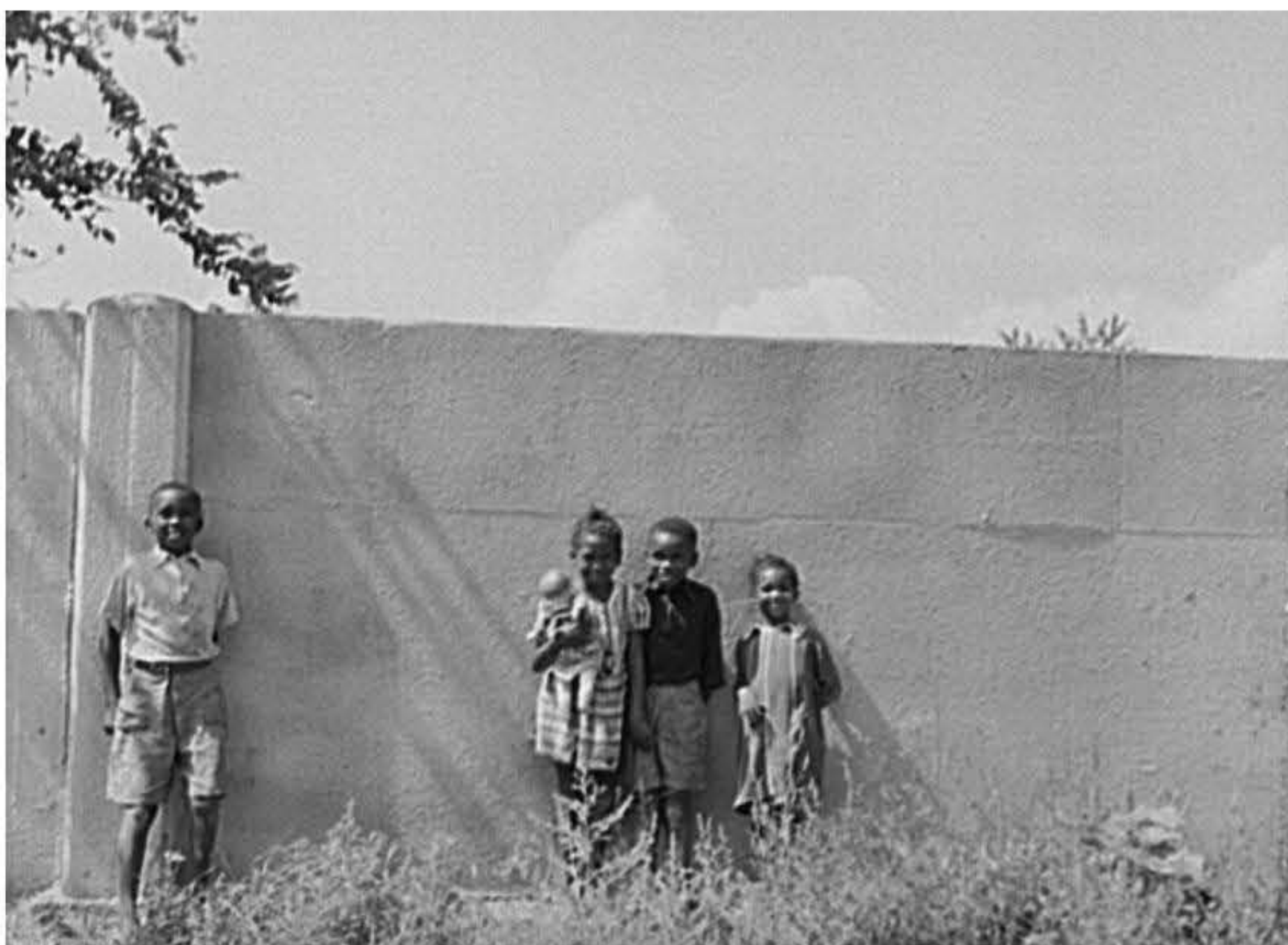
conditions under which banks could loan people money to purchase homes with small down payments and at reasonable interest rates. The vast majority of new homes were built in city suburbs, where suburban living was enabled by the simultaneous construction of highways and the development of suburban services (Oliver and Shapiro 2006).

Banks used FHA guidelines to decide who should be permitted to borrow money. The 1938 *Underwriting Manual* of the FHA stated that “if a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes.” The *Manual* further recommended the implementation of restrictive covenants, which remained in place until they were outlawed in 1949 (quoted in Oliver and Shapiro 2006).

Between 1933 and 1978, U.S. government policies enabled over 35 million families to increase their wealth through housing equity. As homeowners, millions of Americans were able to begin to accumulate the tax savings, home equity, economic stability, and other benefits associated with homeownership. White Americans benefited disproportionately from this shift for two primary reasons: (1) it was easier for white people to purchase homes, and (2) the homes that whites bought increased in value more rapidly than those purchased by blacks because of the perceived desirability of all-white neighborhoods. In addition, few women were able to benefit directly from these policies, as they did not have the financial stability to purchase homes on their own. Because of

racial endogamy in marriages (marrying within one’s race), white women benefited because their white husbands purchased homes, whereas black women only reaped either the same paltry benefits as their husbands or hardly any at all if they were single (Oliver and Shapiro 2006).

One hundred years after slavery ended, these policies and practices related to housing became one of the primary factors responsible for inequality in the wealth portfolios of black and white families in the United States. Racial violence against blacks who tried to move into white neighborhoods continued well after the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Real estate agents continue to practice steering today, and the wealth generated by the properties purchased by whites who benefited from the federal



▲ A real estate developer built a half-mile wall in Detroit in 1940 to separate a black from a white community. Today, because of white flight, the wall separates one black community from another.

housing policies of the 1930s continues to be passed down to those individuals' children and grandchildren today.

For example, in 1948, houses in Levittown, New York, were available only to white families. A white couple born in the 1920s could purchase a brand-new home there for \$8,000, with no down payment, by taking advantage of the federal housing programs. In the 1960s, that family could use the home equity built up in that property to take out loans to pay for their children's college tuition. And if the couple passed away in the 2000s, their children would inherit the home, in a neighborhood still 98 percent white, valued at \$400,000. The opportunity to accumulate that kind of wealth was denied to black families, who were not permitted to purchase homes in Levittown. Eugene Burnett, for example, is a black Army veteran who tried to purchase a home in Levittown in 1949. When he put in an application, the agent told him that "the owners of this development have not as yet decided whether they're going to sell these homes to Negroes" (Lambert 1997). Those black families who were able to purchase homes did not see their real estate values climb in the same way. The average home value in the nearby, primarily non-white Central Islip is about a third of the value of a home in the primarily white Levittown.

Discriminatory and Predatory Lending Practices

Even though the FHA's discriminatory housing programs have been discontinued, black and Latino families have continued to face disadvantages through contemporary discriminatory lending practices. On average, blacks are 2.7 times more likely than whites to be denied mortgages. Prospective homeowners who are denied mortgages have to either forgo the opportunity to accumulate wealth through homeownership or seek out a less favorable loan with a higher interest rate. In fact, black homeowners pay 0.54 percent higher interest rates than whites. This half-point differential adds up to tens of thousands of dollars over the course of a loan. Thus, the racial disparity in lending practices has far-reaching consequences. Bankers often claim that blacks are more often denied loans because they do not have the same creditworthiness as whites. Yet, a study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston revealed that even when credit scores were taken into account, black and Latino mortgage applicants were still 60 percent more likely to be turned down than whites (Oliver and Shapiro 2006). Continued discrimination in home loans perpetuates the wealth inequality that was solidified with the FHA programs of the 1930s (Oliver and Shapiro 2006).

research focus

The Role of Real Estate in Creating Segregated Cities

In 2011, *Forbes* magazine reported that Mission Hills in Johnson County, Kansas, was the third-richest neighborhood in the United States, with a median income of \$243,000 (Vardi 2011). The *Forbes* article did not mention that the neighborhood was 96.8 percent white in 2010 nor that most Kansas City residents did not live in racially segregated neighborhoods prior to the twentieth century. How did segregation happen? And how did it benefit whites? Kevin Gotham's (2000) research addresses these questions through an analysis of the real estate industry.

Between 1900 and 1940, Kansas City went from being a racially integrated city to one with a **segregation index** of 88.0—meaning that 88 percent of all nonwhites would have to move to live in integrated neighborhoods. Gotham (2000) argues that this segregation was facilitated and promoted by the real estate industry.

One of the major facilitators of segregated communities was the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB). In the early twentieth century, NAREB published numerous pamphlets and periodicals that warned real estate firms about the financial dangers of integrated neighborhoods. NAREB actively promoted the ideology that all-white neighborhoods were desirable and wise financial investments. In 1924, NAREB amended its code of ethics to indicate that realtors should not facilitate the purchase of homes by nonwhites in white neighborhoods. It became unethical for realtors to sell blacks homes in white areas.

Racially restrictive covenants were one of the primary tools used to ensure racial segregation in urban areas around the country. Between 1900 and 1947, Johnson County, Kansas, recorded 148 such covenants, accounting for 96 percent of all subdivisions within the county. The last restrictive covenant in Johnson County was recorded in 1962.

The J. C. Nichols Company was one of the pioneers of residential land development in the area and one of the first and most prominent developers to use racially restrictive covenants. Between 1908 and 1949, the Nichols Company built dozens of racially restricted subdivisions, such as Mission Hills; the property deeds for homes in these developments warned prospective buyers that blacks could not be owners or tenants. Moreover, the Nichols Company distributed promotional literature designed to convince middle-class whites that “residential life in a

racially segregated neighborhood was a mark of social status, upward mobility, and protection from the chaos and social problems of the city.”

Kansas City continues to be a hypersegregated city today. Kevin Gotham’s (2000) research on the real estate industry shows that this is not because of white preferences to live in all-white neighborhoods, but because of the real estate industry’s desire to see profits through the creation of all-white spaces and their promotion of these spaces as desirable neighborhoods.

For Discussion

1. Were there ever racially restrictive covenants in the area where you now live?
2. To what extent do you think that restrictive covenants were implemented for profit motives? Does it matter whether the covenants were created to keep property values high or to keep nonwhites out?

Source: Gotham 2000.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, bank lending became more predatory, particularly for blacks and Latinos. **Predatory lenders** traditionally include pawnshops, payday lenders, and check cashing services that charge very high fees and interest rates. Following changes in lending laws, the late 1990s saw the rise of another type of predatory financial practice: **subprime loans**, or high-interest loans to people at high risk of defaulting. Black and Latino homeowners were much more likely than whites to receive loans with unfavorable conditions such as prepayment penalties and high interest rates. Between 1993 and 2000, the percentage of subprime mortgages in black and Latino neighborhoods rose from 2 to 18 percent. Overall, black and Latino families were about twice as likely to receive subprime loans as white families. By 2009, over 15 percent of subprime loans were in foreclosure (Rugh and Massey 2010; Dymski, Hernandez, and Mohanty 2013).

Segregation exacerbated the effects of the economic crisis for black families. Metropolitan areas with higher degrees of racial segregation had higher rates of foreclosure. Additionally, black families in highly segregated cities had been more likely to get subprime loans than their counterparts in less segregated cities. The higher rate of subprime loans in segregated cities was partly because unregulated mortgage brokers targeted black neighborhoods where regulated banks were less likely to have branches. Notably, more than half of all subprime loans made in the 2000s were for refinancing instead of

segregation index

Measure stating that 88 percent nonwhites would have to move in order for the city to be fully residentially integrated.

predatory lender A pawnshop, payday lender, or check cashing service that charges very high fees and interest rates.

subprime loan High-interest loan to someone at high risk of defaulting.

> In the aftermath of the 2007–2009 housing crisis, protestors, like these in Brooklyn in 2011, fought back against predatory lenders and foreclosures in their communities.



purchasing new homes. When those homes in primarily black neighborhoods failed to appreciate in value as expected or decreased in value, families who had borrowed at high interest rates found themselves in financial trouble (Rugh and Massey 2010; Dymksi et al. 2011).

Neighborhood Segregation Today

Even though the housing policies that contributed to residential segregation have been repealed, neighborhood segregation persists today. How do we quantify it? One measure is the **dissimilarity index**, which describes the extent to which two groups—such as blacks and whites—are found in equal proportions in all neighborhoods. We can interpret this measure as the percentage of individuals in either group who would have to move to achieve perfect integration. Another tool for measuring segregation is the **isolation index**, which compares a neighborhood’s demographics against citywide demographics. If, for example, a city is 30 percent black, yet blacks live in neighborhoods that are 50 percent black, the isolation index would be the difference, 20 percent.

Black–white segregation continues to have the highest national dissimilarity index. In 2010, Milwaukee had the highest black–white segregation index at 81.5. In contrast, the segregation index for Hispanics/Latinos in Milwaukee was 57.0. The city with the highest Hispanic/Latino–white segregation index was Springfield, Massachusetts, at 63.4. Los Angeles had the second highest, at 62.2 (Michigan Population Studies Center, n.d.). The black–white segregation index

dissimilarity index

Measure that describes the extent to which two groups—such as blacks and whites—are found in equal proportions in all neighborhoods.

isolation index Measure that compares a neighborhood’s demographics against citywide demographics.

Sabriya Ihsan Williams on Neighborhood Stereotyping

Sabriya Ihsan Williams is a black Muslim woman who lives in Washington, DC, in a primarily white neighborhood just a few houses down from Vice President Mike Pence. In this essay, she expresses her frustration that President Trump consistently refers to African Americans as living in “inner cities” and in poverty. In contrast, Sabriya, her husband, and their two children live in one of DC’s most exclusive (and whitest) neighborhoods. Although racial segregation is high in cities across the United States, not all African Americans live in “inner cities.”

The reality of a Trump presidency was not something that I ever imagined would happen. I believed this country had a moral compass that surpassed being Republican or Democrat.

It saddens and angers me to hear Trump discuss “the blacks,” and the inner city and how we are “living in poverty,” in communities that are, “in the worst shape ever” as if this were a fact for every African American. These statements are a clear indicator of how disconnected he is to African Americans and other minorities. He pitted poor white communities against blacks, Latinos, Muslims, anybody that doesn’t look like, speak like, or pray like him.

I am one of “the Blacks.” I am a woman and a Muslim and I don’t live in poverty. I live a stone’s throw from where our Vice President made his home in the Chevy Chase neighborhood of Washington, DC. I am NOT who Trump thinks of when he thinks of African Americans.

We have a voice and that was made clear by the 94 percent of African American women that did not vote for him. We all need to acknowledge that we do not have a person in the White House that wants diversity to thrive or who will close large gaps in racial disparities that exist in this country.

This is why I will be LOUD and HYPERVIGILANT and UNAPOLOGETIC every time I read or hear him speak of “the blacks,” and how downtrodden we are and I will do the same when he does it to women, Latinos, Muslims, and the LGBTQ community.



Sabriya and her family live in an affluent neighborhood in Washington, DC.

Voices

(continued)



Continued

We are not one big monolith. We are many things—one of the most important being fighters! We will not be silenced by this administration or put into a box. Contrary to what Trump would have you believe, my box isn't living in poverty in the inner city; it is right around the corner from Vice President Mike Pence!

Source: Ihsan Williams 2017.

.....

is consistently high in cities with large black populations, such as Detroit and Chicago. This index in 2010 was 80 for Detroit and 76 for Chicago. The average Detroit black resident lives in a neighborhood that is 81 percent black, and the average black person in Chicago lives in a neighborhood that is 67 percent black. Latinos and Asian Americans have remained somewhat less segregated from whites, with dissimilarity indexes of 48 and 41, respectively, in 2010 (Logan and Stults 2011).

Segregation is high in the United States, but it is not absolute: many people share neighborhoods with people of different races. According to data from the 2010 census, the average white American in a metropolitan area lives in a neighborhood that is 75 percent white, whereas the average African American lives in a neighborhood that is 45 percent white and 45 percent black. The average Latino lives in a neighborhood that is 35 percent white, and the average Asian American lives in a neighborhood that is 49 percent white (see Figure 10-2). The only group that, on average, lives in a primarily white neighborhood is whites (Logan and Stults 2011).

Scholars sometimes refer to African Americans in urban areas as **hypersegregated** because of the high levels of segregation in these neighborhoods. In contrast, other racial and ethnic minorities tend not to experience such high levels of segregation. Studies show relatively low levels of Native American segregation in urban areas, especially compared to the levels experienced by African Americans (Wilkes and Iceland 2004). In 2000, 1.4 million Native Americans lived in rural areas—accounting for about a third of all Native Americans. Most of these rural Native Americans lived on Indian reservations, effectively separated from non-Native Americans. Outside of reservations, however, rural Native Americans have relatively low levels of segregation (Lichter, Parisi, Grice, and Taquino 2007).

Racial segregation poses a problem not just because people of different races have little contact with one another but because it exacerbates existing inequalities. Black and Latino families of all economic statuses are more likely than white families to live in neighborhoods with high poverty rates. Even affluent blacks and Latinos live in neighborhoods with fewer resources than those inhabited by poor whites (Logan 2013). Racial segregation often means concentrated poverty, which in turn leads to underresourced neighborhoods

hypersegregation

Instances of notably high levels of segregation.

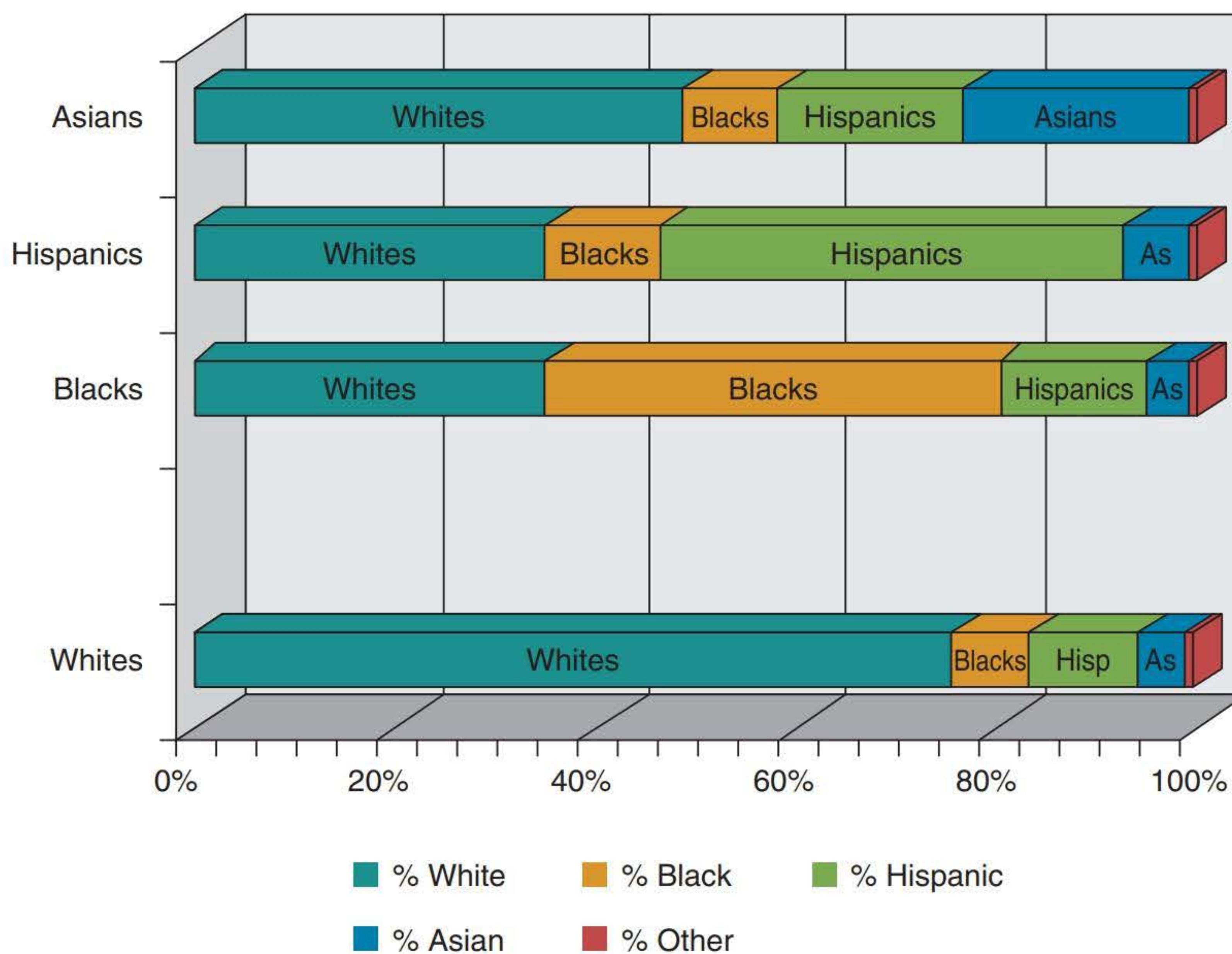
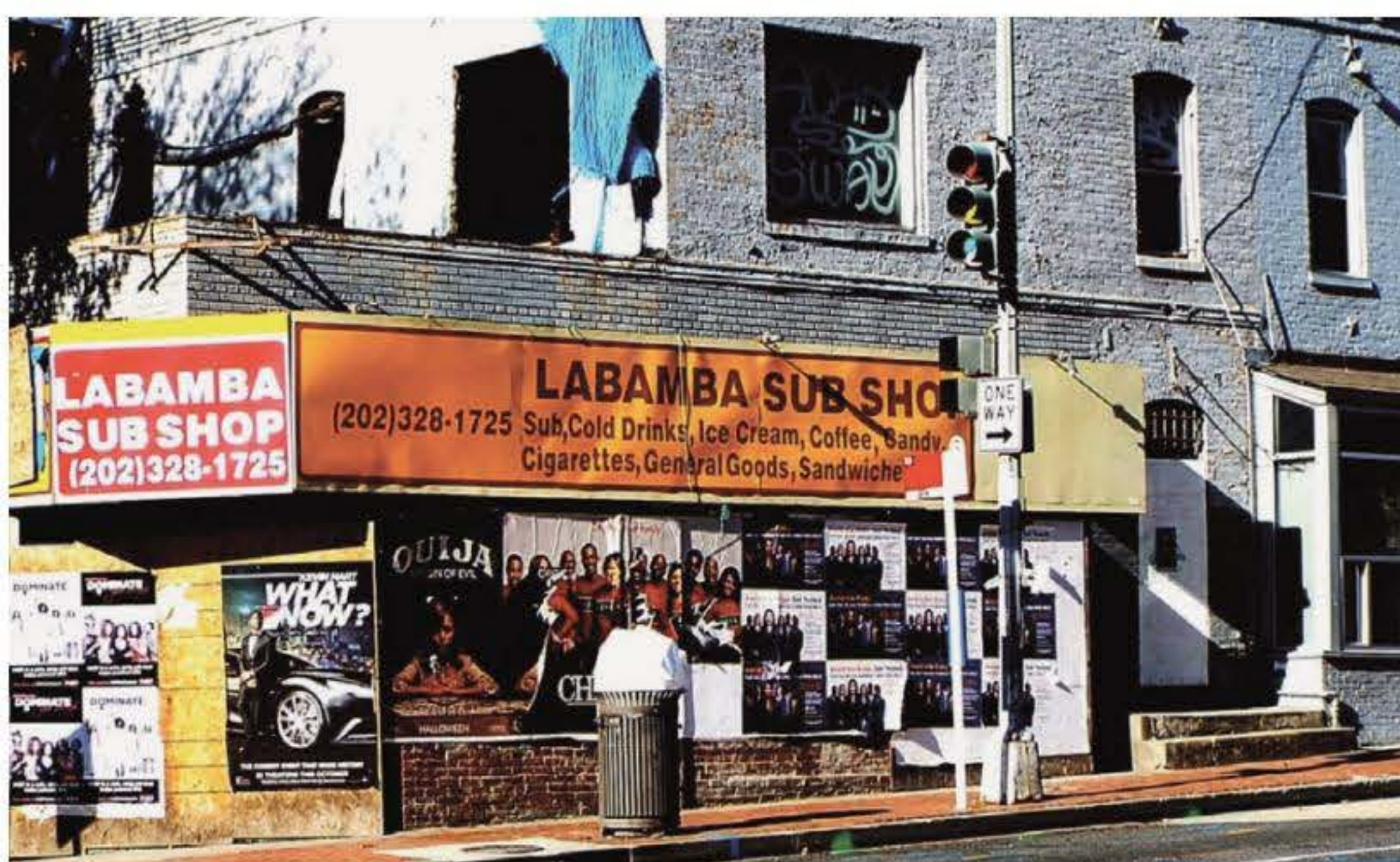


FIGURE 10-2.
Diversity Experienced
in Each Group's Typical
Neighborhood, by Race/
Ethnicity, 2010

Source: Logan and Stults (2011).

with poor public schools, high levels of crime, and high unemployment rates. High levels of racial segregation mean that black and Latino families are more likely than white families to live in neighborhoods that are inhospitable to their success. Children who grow up in segregated, high-poverty neighborhoods are much less likely to finish high school and to secure employment. They are more likely to experience violence growing up and to have children out of wedlock. Residential segregation limits opportunities for middle-class as well as poor black families (Charles 2003). One of the most longstanding consequences of segregation is that black families in black neighborhoods are unable to build up home equity and therefore lag far behind white families in wealth accumulation.

As we have seen, racial segregation in housing is driven by formal and informal policies and practices. It is also affected by whites' preferences to live in primarily white neighborhoods. Most white Americans balk at the idea of living in a neighborhood with more than a few black families. Contrary to popular perceptions, residential segregation is not due to black Americans' preferences for living exclusively among other black Americans. Sociologists Maria Krysan and Reynolds Farley (2002) analyzed survey data from 2,000 black families in several cities and found that African Americans prefer racially diverse neighborhoods. In the study, the interviewers showed respondents fictional representations of five neighborhoods, ranging from all black to all white, and asked them to rank the neighborhoods in order of preference. They also asked respondents



a. Poor, primarily black/Latino neighborhood



b. Upper-middle-class, primarily black neighborhood



c. Upper-middle-class, primarily white neighborhood



d. Poor, primarily white neighborhood

▲ What do these photos of neighborhoods in and around Washington, D.C., tell you about the lives of the people who live there? What do these photos tell you about neighborhood stereotypes?

if they would not want to live in one of the fictional neighborhoods. Half of the black respondents chose the neighborhood that was evenly split between black and white as their most preferred neighborhood. Only 20 percent of the black respondents chose the neighborhood that was all black. African Americans in this survey expressed a strong preference for mixed neighborhoods. Although only 35 percent of African Americans were willing to be the first black family to move into a white neighborhood, nearly all of the respondents expressed willingness to move into a neighborhood if it was primarily white, as long as there were one or two other black families living there. In contrast, less than a third of white respondents indicated they were willing to move into a neighborhood that was evenly split between black and white families.

WEALTH INEQUALITIES

Racial segregation in housing is one of the driving factors behind wealth disparities among racial groups. On average, African Americans and Latinos have less than 9 percent of the wealth of whites (At a Glance 10-1; Pew Research Center

2014). The disparities between the wealth portfolios of whites and Latinos and between those of whites and blacks are about twice as large today as they were prior to the recession that began in 2007, primarily as a result of residual effects from the related crisis in the housing market. The housing crisis wiped out all of the gains in wealth made by black and Latino families compared to whites since 1984, when the United States first began to track wealth inequality. In 2009, one-third of black and Latino households had zero or negative wealth (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor 2011). By 2013, the median white household had 13 times the net wealth of the median black household and 10 times the wealth of the median Latino/a household (Traub, Sullivan, Meschede, and Shapiro 2017).

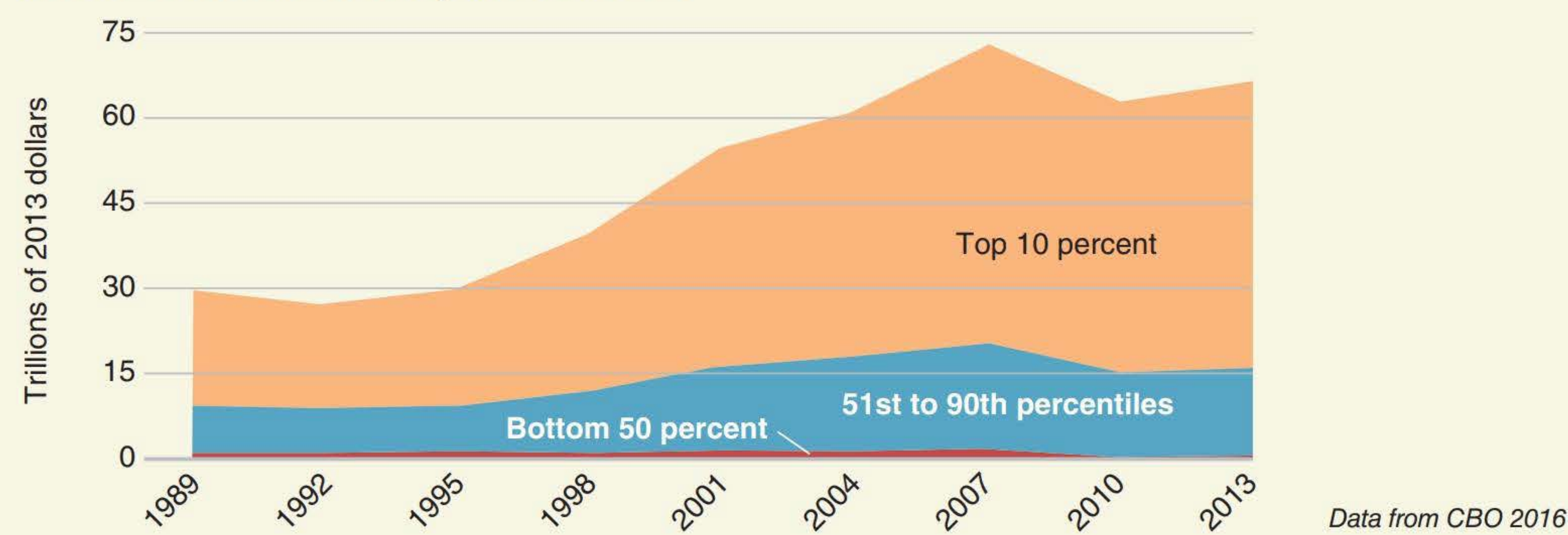
Let's briefly revisit the differences between income and wealth. Americans primarily use their income to live on a day-to-day basis: to pay the rent or mortgage, to buy food and other necessities, to pay for school, and to pay bills. Income differentials often translate into differences in standards of living. Wealth, by contrast, has a different functionality. Wealth includes an individual's accumulated assets, such as savings, home equity, stocks, and business ownership. People don't use wealth to pay for daily expenses (except in financial emergencies). Instead, wealth grants financial stability and is often used to ensure the financial success of future generations through inheritances. Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro (2006, 175) contend that "wealth is money that is not typically used to purchase milk, shoes, or other necessities. . . . It is used to create opportunities, secure a desired stature and standard of living, or pass along a class status already obtained to a new generation." The vast discrepancies between black and white wealth, then, translate into the solidification of racial inequality across generations.

There are many reasons for wealth inequality. One of the main factors is inequality in home values and homeownership. In 2005, blacks and Latinos derived much greater proportions of their wealth from their homes than whites. Looking at the loss in average wealth for families between 2005 and 2009, it is clear that nearly all of the losses for all families came from losses in home equity (Figure 10-3). Since black and Latino families had almost no other wealth—an average of \$479 for Latino families and \$626 for black families—these households lost nearly all of their wealth as a result of the housing crisis (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor 2011).

In 2000, Native Americans were the racial group with the lowest average incomes. Relatively little data is available on the wealth holdings of Native Americans. However, Jay Zagorsky (2006) was able to use data from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth to assess their wealth holdings. He found that in 2000, the average Native American born between 1957 and 1965 had only \$5,700 in wealth, compared with the \$65,500 amassed by his or her white counterpart. He also found that only 43 percent of the Native Americans

AT A GLANCE 10.1 Wealth Disparities in the United States

The wealth of the top 10% of Americans has grown considerably since 1995, while the wealth of the other 90% has remained relatively stable or declined.



Racial and ethnic wealth gaps have grown since the great recession



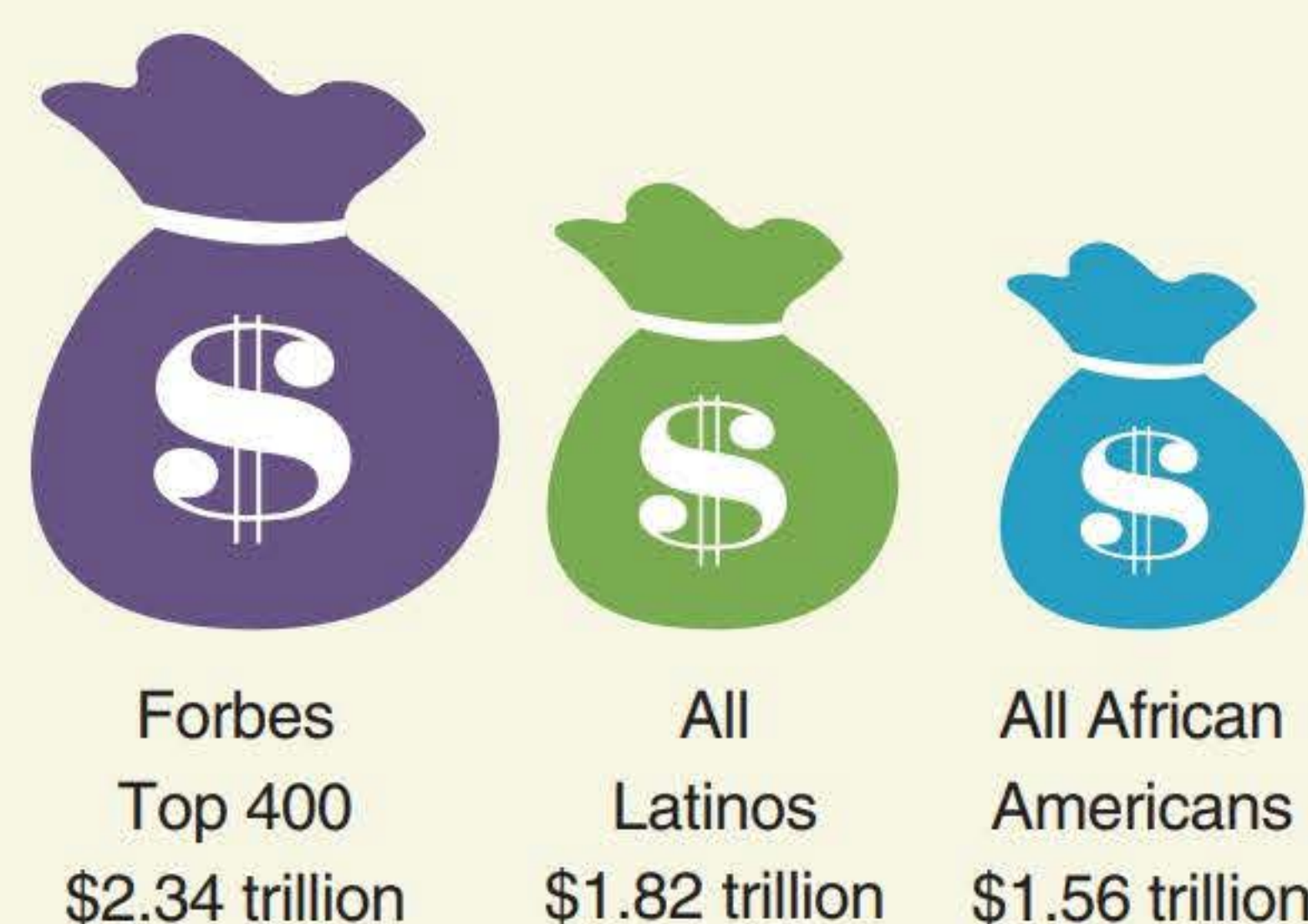
1995 The median net worth of one white household was 7 times that of a black household and 6 times that of a Hispanic/Latino household.

2013 The median net worth of one white household was 13 times that of a black household and 10 times that of a Hispanic/Latino household.

White household Black household Hispanic/Latino household

Data from Pew Research Center 2014

The racial wealth divide Forbes 400 net worth (the 400 richest Americans) compared with all African American and Latino households, 2015.

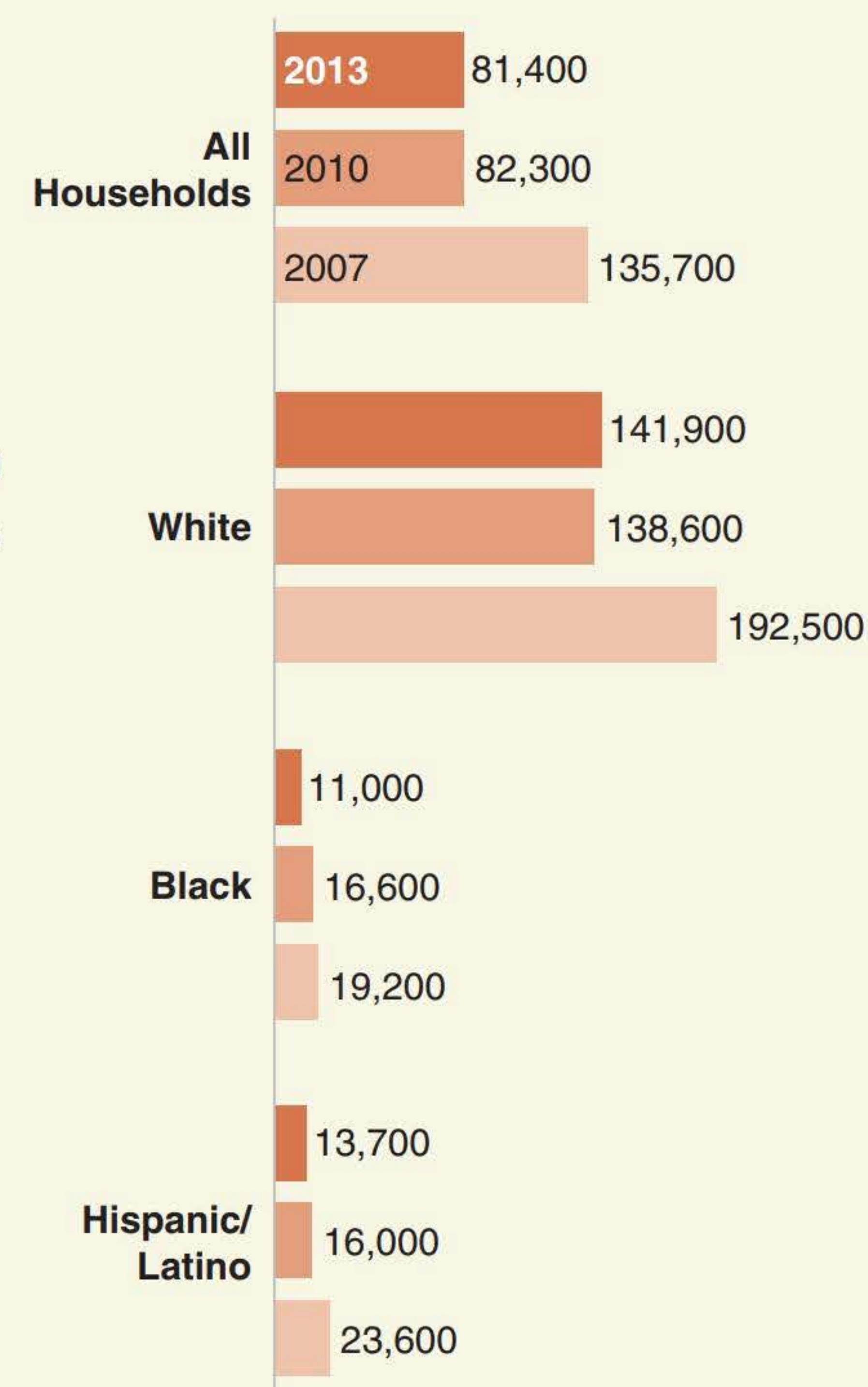


Just **400 extremely wealthy** individuals have as much wealth as **15 million Hispanic/Latino** households and **16 million African American** households.

Data from Institute for Policy Studies 2015

Wealth by race and ethnicity, 2007–2013

Median net worth of households, in 2013 dollars



Data from Pew Research Center 2014

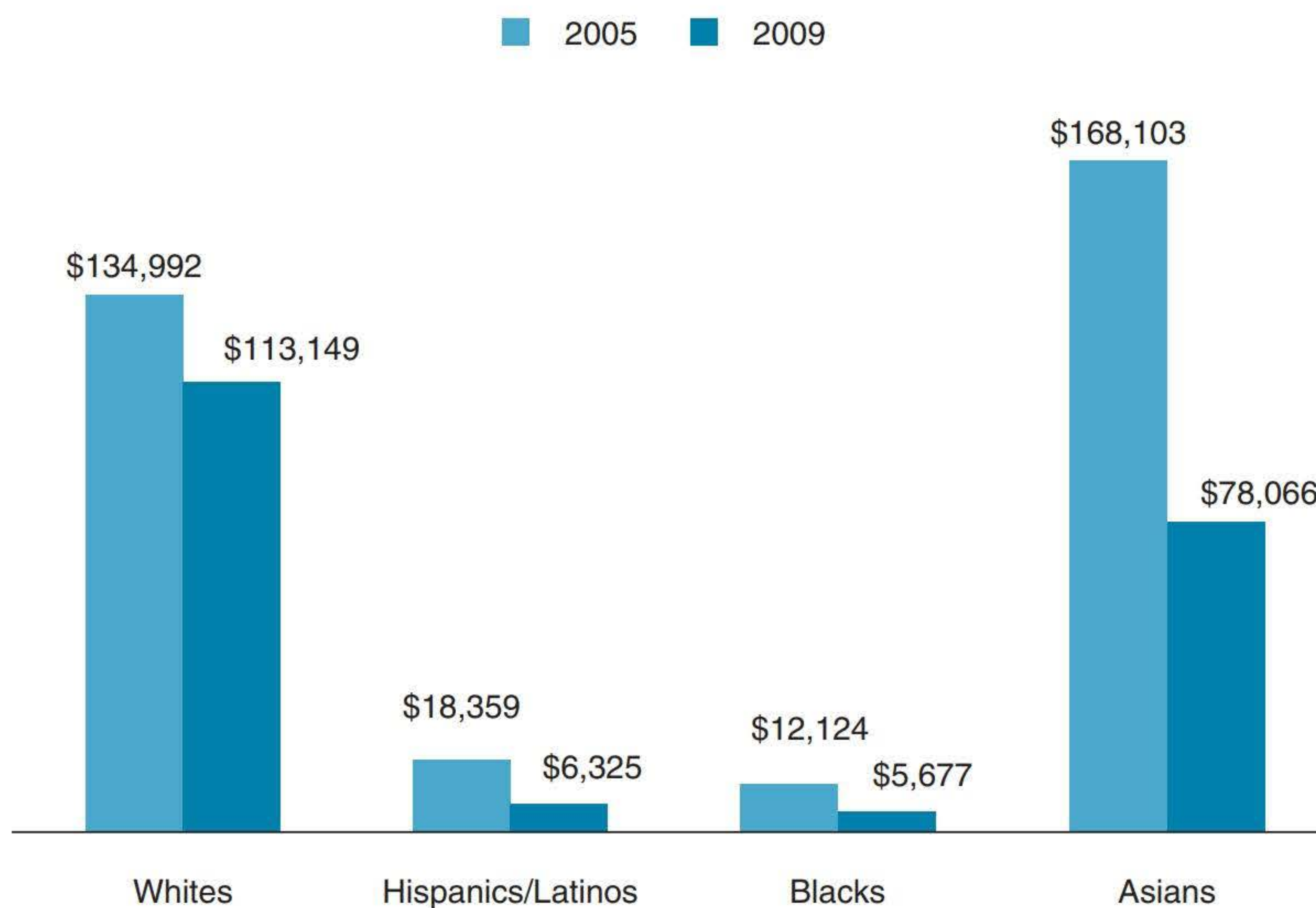


FIGURE 10-3.
Average Wealth of Families
by Race/Ethnicity in 2005
and 2009

Source: Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor (2011).

in this age group had bank accounts, compared with 65 percent of baby boomers overall. Only a third of Native American baby boomers owned homes, compared with 57 percent overall. Zagorsky (2006) found that Native Americans own fewer businesses, have lower rates of homeownership, and reside in homes with lower values than the average person living in the United States.

research focus

The Color of Wealth in the Nation's Capital

In Washington, D.C., white households have, on average, a net worth that is 81 times greater than that of black households. The Urban Institute carried out a telephone survey in 2014 to assess the levels of wealth inequality in the nation's capital, which is 47.7 percent black, 35.7 percent white, 10.4 percent Latino, and 3.7 percent Asian. The study found substantial wealth disparities by race and ethnicity. The median net worth—the sum of all assets less the value of debts—for white households was \$284,000, compared with \$13,000 for Latino households, \$3,500 for U.S. black households, and \$3,000 for African households. Korean, Asian Indian, and Vietnamese households all had a median net worth of over \$400,000, higher than that of the average white household.

(continued)

The wealth inequalities are not due solely to income inequalities: in 2014, the median income for both white and Chinese households in Washington, D.C., was \$110,000. For African American households, it was \$72,000. Latino households had the lowest median family income, at \$59,000. These income differences pale in comparison to wealth differences.

Just over half of white households in the study owned stocks, compared with 18.6 percent of U.S. black households, 14.6 percent of African households, and 25.9 percent of Latino households. This figure was just under 50 percent for Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Asian Indian households.

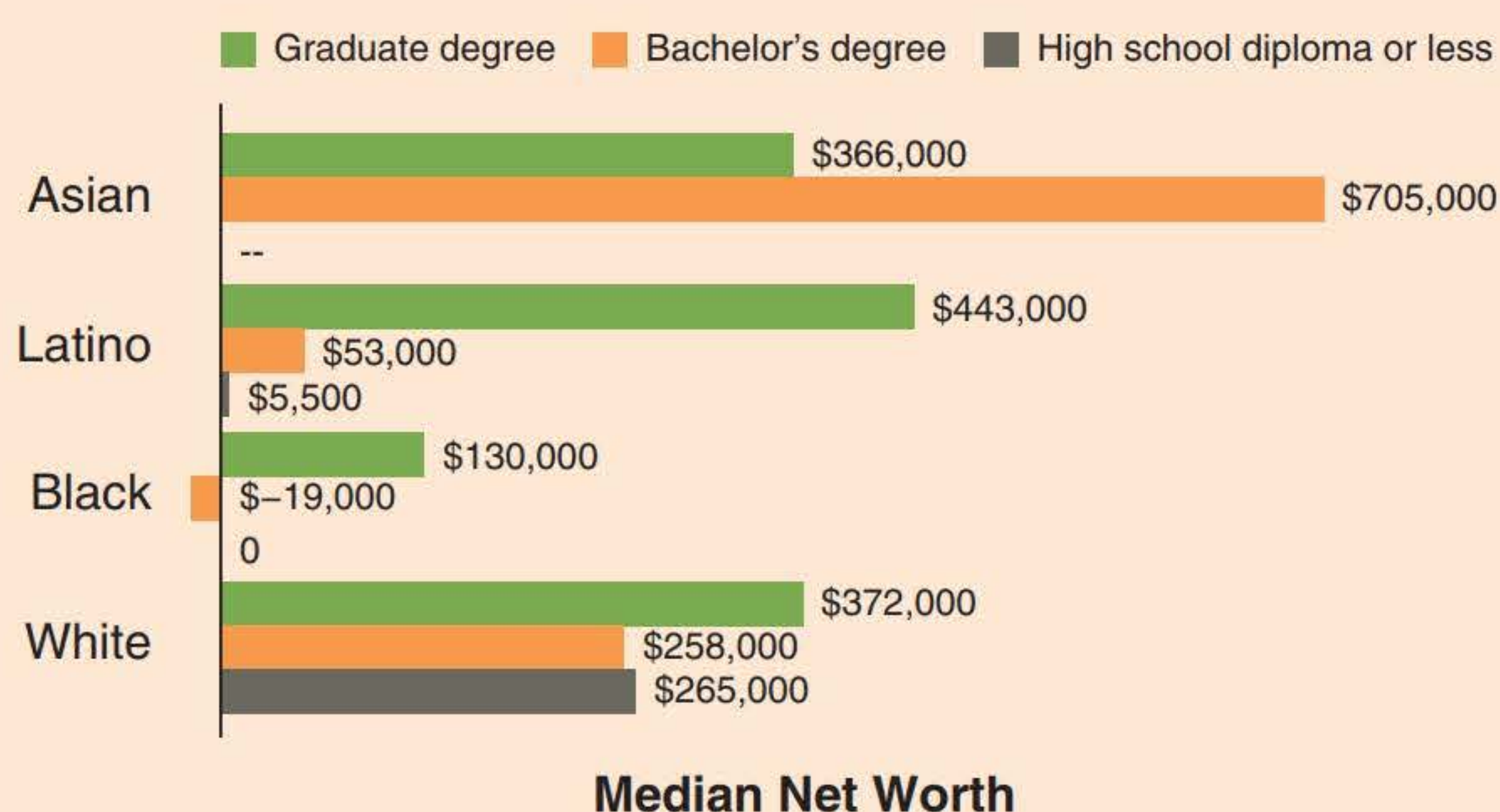
Whereas only a quarter of black households and a fifth of Latino households had individual retirement accounts, two-thirds of white, Chinese, and Asian Indian households had these accounts.

Homeownership rates also varied between groups: 78 percent of white households, 90 percent of Chinese households, and 94 percent of Vietnamese households owned their homes, compared with 58 percent of U.S. black households and about half of African black and Latino households. The home values also varied: U.S. black and African households owned homes that were 67 percent and 72 percent, respectively, of the median value of homes owned by whites.

Similar to other studies, Kijakazi et al. found that even highly educated black families have less wealth on average than white families. For white households headed by an individual with a high school diploma or less, the average net worth was \$265,000, compared with \$130,000 for black households headed by an individual with a graduate degree. Whereas net worth for whites varies relatively little between those who have a high school diploma or less and those with a bachelor's degree, for Latino households the difference is substantial: \$5,500 versus \$53,000. For black households, the largest gain is between a B.A. degree (\$19,000) and a graduate degree (\$130,000). At all educational levels, however, net worth for blacks lags behind that for whites.

Median Net Worth by Educational Attainment

Source: Kijakazi et al. 2016.



Inequality in Homeownership and Home Values

Using the 2001 American Housing Survey, Lauren Krivo and Robert Kaufman (2004) found that over 70 percent of white households owned their homes, compared with 46 percent of black households, 49 percent of Latino households, and 55 percent of Asian households. In addition, they found that white homeowners have more home equity than do blacks and Latinos. The median value of home equity for blacks was \$52,882, and for Latinos it was \$60,000. In contrast, the median home equity value for whites was \$80,000. At \$111,100, Asians had the highest average home equity. Moreover, blacks and Latinos were the most likely to have high-interest mortgages: 4 percent of whites had an interest rate higher than 9 percent, compared with nearly 11 percent of black homeowners and 7 percent of Latino homeowners. Asians were the least likely to have this kind of mortgage, with only 1.5 percent reporting high interest rates.

Between 2007 and 2009, blacks and Latinos were twice as likely as whites to experience foreclosures (Kochhar et al. 2011). Analyses of home loans made between 2005 and 2008 reveals that 790 African Americans experienced a foreclosure by 2009 for each 10,000 loans, compared with 769 Hispanics and 452 whites. By 2010, 17 percent of Latino homeowners, 11 percent of African American homeowners, and 7 percent of non-Hispanic white homeowners had lost or were at imminent risk of losing their homes (Gruenstein Bocian, Li, and Ernst 2010). The housing crisis thus exacerbated preexisting inequalities in homeownership and home values.

Wealth Inequality Beyond Homeownership

Families can have negative wealth if the total of their debts exceeds the total value of their assets. This situation has become increasingly common with the expansion of home equity loans, falling housing prices, and rising student debt.

Wealth includes factors beyond homeownership, such as stock holdings. When stock prices plummeted in 2007, black and Latino families lost the largest shares of their holdings. Latinos who owned stocks and mutual funds saw a 32 percent decline in their value between 2005 and 2009, and blacks saw a 71 percent decline in the same period. The stocks owned by whites fell only 9 percent, and those owned by Asians actually increased 19 percent during this same period (Kochhar et al. 2011). In 2013, only 3.3 percent of black households owned stocks, as compared with 17.2 percent of white households (Herring and Henderson 2016).

High levels of debt also help explain wealth inequality. In 2002, over a quarter of black and Latino households had negative net worth, compared

with 13 percent of white households. The numbers are even starker when we consider gender: nearly half of all black and Latina women had zero or negative wealth in 2007 (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor 2011). In 2013, over half (54 percent) of young black households (aged twenty-five to forty) had student debt, compared with 39 percent of young white households. Relatedly, these young black households had a median wealth of \$3,600, compared with young white households' median wealth of \$35,800 (Huelsman et al. 2015).

EXPLAINING THE WEALTH GAP IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Rather than decreasing over time, inequalities among whites, blacks, and Latinos are increasing. The wealth gap between blacks and whites tripled between 1984 and 2009. In 2013, Thomas Shapiro, Tatjana Meschede, and Sam Osoro published a study that sought to explain why. Based on their study of 1,700 households, these analysts attributed the wealth gap to five factors:

1. Years of homeownership
2. Household income
3. Years of unemployment
4. College education
5. Inheritances or financial support from family members

Notably, Shapiro and colleagues did not find the wealth gap to be a consequence of behavioral differences, such as consumption patterns or the propensity to build savings. It is also not solely a function of income differentials. Instead, the researchers were able to explain two-thirds of the wealth gap using these five factors. Years of homeownership accounted for 27 percent of the difference, household income for 20 percent, unemployment for 9 percent, and college education and inheritances for 5 percent each (Shapiro, Meschede, and Osoro 2013).

Figure 10-4 presents an explanation of the gap between black and white wealth. Many people would expect household income to account for the differences in wealth. However, as we have seen, income differences can explain only a portion of wealth inequalities. And although it is true that college education makes it easier to build up wealth, the fact that whites are more likely to be college educated accounts for only 5 percent of the differences in wealth between white and black households.

In a follow-up study, Amy Traub et al. (2017) found that the factors many people think explain wealth inequality, such as education and out-of-wedlock birth, in fact do not. White adults with less than a high school education who had children but were not married and who did not work full time had more wealth on average than black and Latino adults who were married, completed higher levels of education, or worked longer hours. For example, among households under age 55, the median white high school dropout has a similar amount of wealth to the median black or Latino adult who graduated high school and attended some college. Additionally, white adults who attended college have 7.2 times more wealth than their African American counterparts and 3.9 times more than their Latino counterparts.

Years of homeownership accounted for the largest portion of the differences in wealth between white and black families. African American families tend to purchase homes later in life because they face more obstacles in home buying than whites. Further, black homeowners are less likely to build up equity over the years because of residential segregation, and white families are more likely to receive financial assistance in purchasing a home from their family members. Even though homeownership accounts for, on average, 53 percent of the wealth black families have, compared with 39 percent for whites, the return on investment in housing turns out to be far greater for white than for black households (Shapiro et al. Osoro 2013). Black families who are able to purchase homes face outright discrimination by real estate agents who continue to steer them to black neighborhoods and by lenders who quote them higher interest rates. The limited market potential for homes in primarily black neighborhoods inhibits the possibility for the value of these homes to increase, and the higher interest rates make it more difficult for blacks to pay off their mortgages quickly. These factors work together to reduce the home equity of blacks, thereby enhancing the wealth gap (Krivo and Kaufman 2004).

The foreclosure crisis of 2007–2009 further decimated black and Latino wealth portfolios. A study by the Center for Responsible Lending (Bocian, Li,

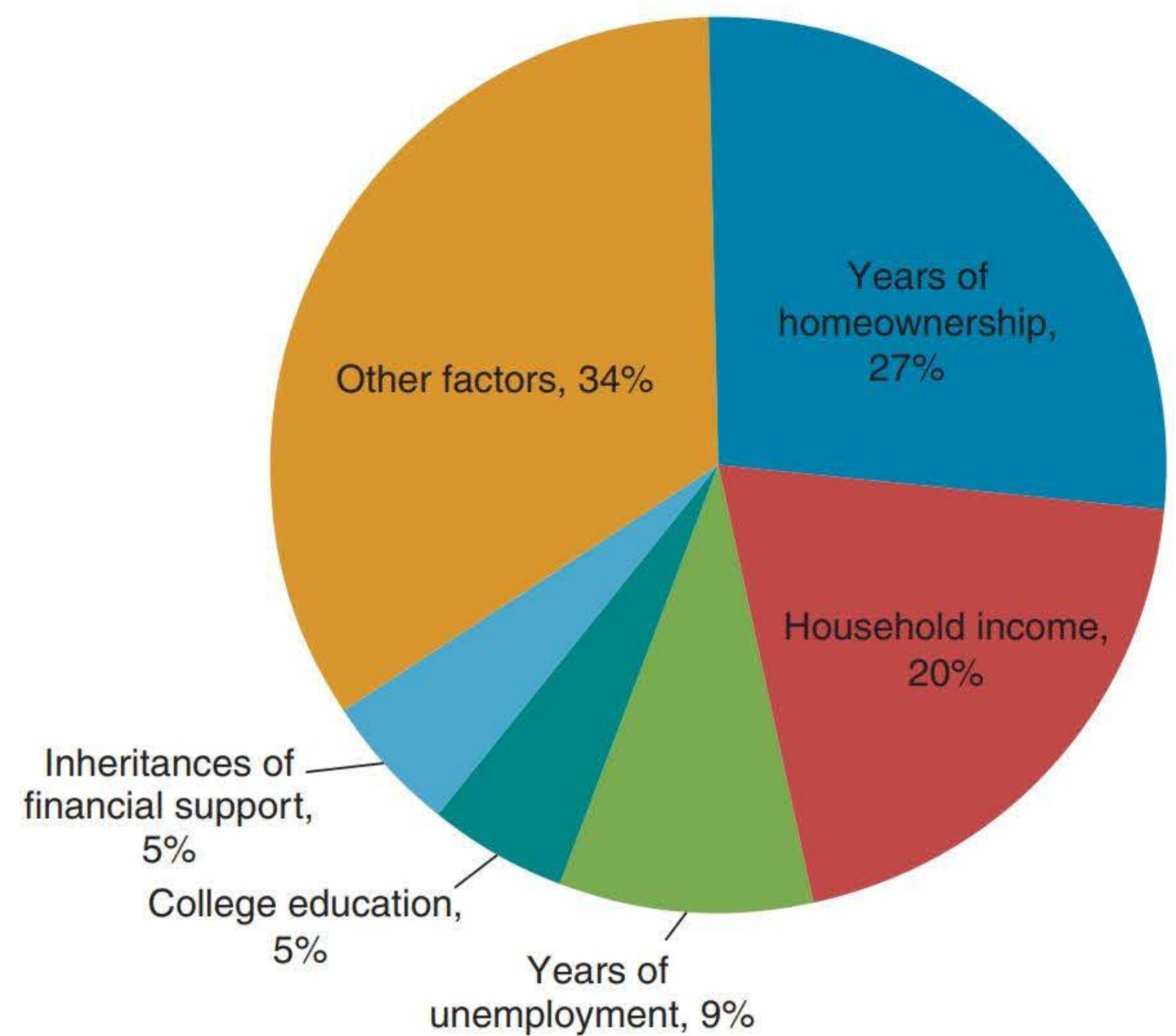


FIGURE 10-4.

How Do We Explain the Black/White Wealth Gap Today?

Source: Shapiro, Meschede, and Osoro (2013).

and Ernst 2010) found that among recent borrowers, nearly 8 percent of black and Latino homeowners lost their homes, compared with 4.5 percent of whites. Nearly two-thirds of all foreclosures between 2005 and 2008 were on homes mortgaged using subprime loans, meaning that people with subprime loans were three times as likely to experience a foreclosure than people with conventional or government loans. And black and Latino borrowers were the most likely to get subprime loans with unfavorable conditions (Bocian et al. 2010).

Whites and blacks at similar income levels tend to have vastly different wealth portfolios. One reason is that whites are more likely to have jobs with benefits. This means that they are less likely to dip into their savings for medical emergencies and that their employers are more likely to be contributing to a retirement plan (Shapiro et al. 2013). Blacks also tend to be in more precarious employment situations and are more likely to lose their jobs. When unemployment rose from 5.0 percent in December 2007 to 9.5 percent in June 2009, Latinos and blacks were hit the hardest, with black unemployment rates peaking at 15.6 percent and the Latino rate at 12.6 percent in 2009 (Kochhar et al. 2011).

The 2013 study by Shapiro and his colleagues found that 36 percent of white households inherited some money over the twenty-five-year period under study, compared with only 7 percent of black households. Moreover, the inheritances black households received were, on average, only about 10 percent of the amount inherited by white households. Inheritances are thus another important part of the legacy of inequality in the United States.

Wealth researchers such as John Powell (2008), Melvin Oliver, and Thomas Shapiro (2006) make a case for **asset-based social policies** that are designed to help narrow the wealth gap. These researchers contend that the FHA policies of the early twentieth century set the stage for the wealth gap and that now the United States has the responsibility of reversing that trend by setting up proactive policies. These policies could include individual-level assistance in buying homes as well as larger-scale efforts such as improvements to transportation and investments in neighborhoods. For example, if the local, state, or federal government invested money in a working-class black neighborhood by building a transportation hub, transforming empty lots into parks, and revitalizing the business district, this would increase property values and provide job opportunities for the local community, thereby enhancing their wealth portfolios. It would take enormous investments to reverse the trend, but that is primarily because of the decades of investment the federal government has put into white communities.

asset-based social policy

Proactive policy, at either the individual or structural level, designed to help narrow the wealth gap.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we have seen how wealth inequalities are entrenched and complex. Married white couples with college educations are well positioned to accumulate wealth over the course of their lives. However, married black couples with the same levels of education consistently earn less money and have much less wealth. Wealth provides a safety net for emergencies, such as serious medical issues or the loss of a job. This means that comfortably middle-class black families are at a much greater risk of descending into poverty than similarly placed white families. Not all white families have wealth, but historical racial disparities in the United States, as well as ongoing discriminatory practices, ensure that white families are more likely to accumulate wealth than black and Latino families.

Wealth also provides opportunities and allows families to invest in their future and to take risks. Families with substantial home equity can use this asset to finance their children’s college educations. Families with significant savings and a wide social net can use them to take risks and invest in business opportunities. In these and other ways, wealth begets more wealth. For these reasons, wealth inequality is hard to overcome.

Between 1933 and 1978, federal government policies enabled over 35 million families to purchase homes in new suburban areas. As a direct consequence of these policies, these families will pass on trillions of dollars of wealth to their children through accumulated home equity. Nearly all these families are white because nonwhite Americans were locked out of this tremendous wealth-generating federal program. Today, most black families have no wealth to pass on to their children. For this reason, many activists contend that it is time for the federal government to enact new wealth-generating programs that, unlike past programs, are not exclusive to white Americans (Oliver and Shapiro 2006).

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

wealth	283	Federal Housing Administration (FHA)	287	dissimilarity index	292
assets	283			isolation index	292
residential segregation	285	segregation index	291	hypersegregation	294
racially restrictive covenants	286	predatory lender	291	asset-based social policy	304
steering	287	subprime loan	291		

10.1 What are the historical reasons for housing and wealth inequalities in the United States? (pp. 282–285)

- Enslaved African Americans were unable to accumulate wealth. Once freed, their opportunities for land ownership were limited.

Review

- » What does slavery have to do with contemporary wealth inequalities?

Critical Thinking

- » In the United States, why does the idea endure that if you work hard, you will get ahead? Why might this not be true, especially for people of color?
- » Have any of the federal programs mentioned in this chapter helped your family accumulate wealth? How has your family's race, class, and immigration history played a role in the accumulation of wealth in your family?

10.2 When and how did residential segregation become a characteristic of U.S. cities? (pp. 286–296)

- Today, most U.S. cities are segregated, but this has not always been the case.
- Residential segregation was created in the early twentieth century by white residents who desired homogeneous neighborhoods, profit seeking by the real estate industry, and federal housing programs that were exclusively available to whites.
- Whites are the only group that, on average, lives in primarily white neighborhoods.
- Black families are the most likely group to be hypersegregated.

Review

- » What factors contributed to the creation of residential segregation?
- » How is residential segregation related to the racial wealth gap?

Critical Thinking

- » Why is racial segregation problematic? Provide at least three separate reasons.

10.3 What is the extent of wealth inequalities today in homeownership and beyond? (pp. 297–302)

- On average, African Americans and Latinos have less than 9 percent of the wealth of whites. The 2007–2009 housing crisis exacerbated racial inequalities in wealth.

Review

- » What is the difference between wealth and income? Why is this difference important in studies of racial inequality?
- » Why and how did the wealth gap between whites and other groups change between 2005 and 2009?

Critical Thinking

- » What distinct social challenges stem from overall wealth inequality and the racial wealth gap?

10.4 What factors are perpetuating and exacerbating wealth inequalities? (pp. 302–304)

- Black families with incomes similar to those of white families have substantially less wealth. This is because wealth is not solely a function of income differentials. The disparity is also attributable to years of homeownership, years of unemployment, college education, and inheritances.

Review

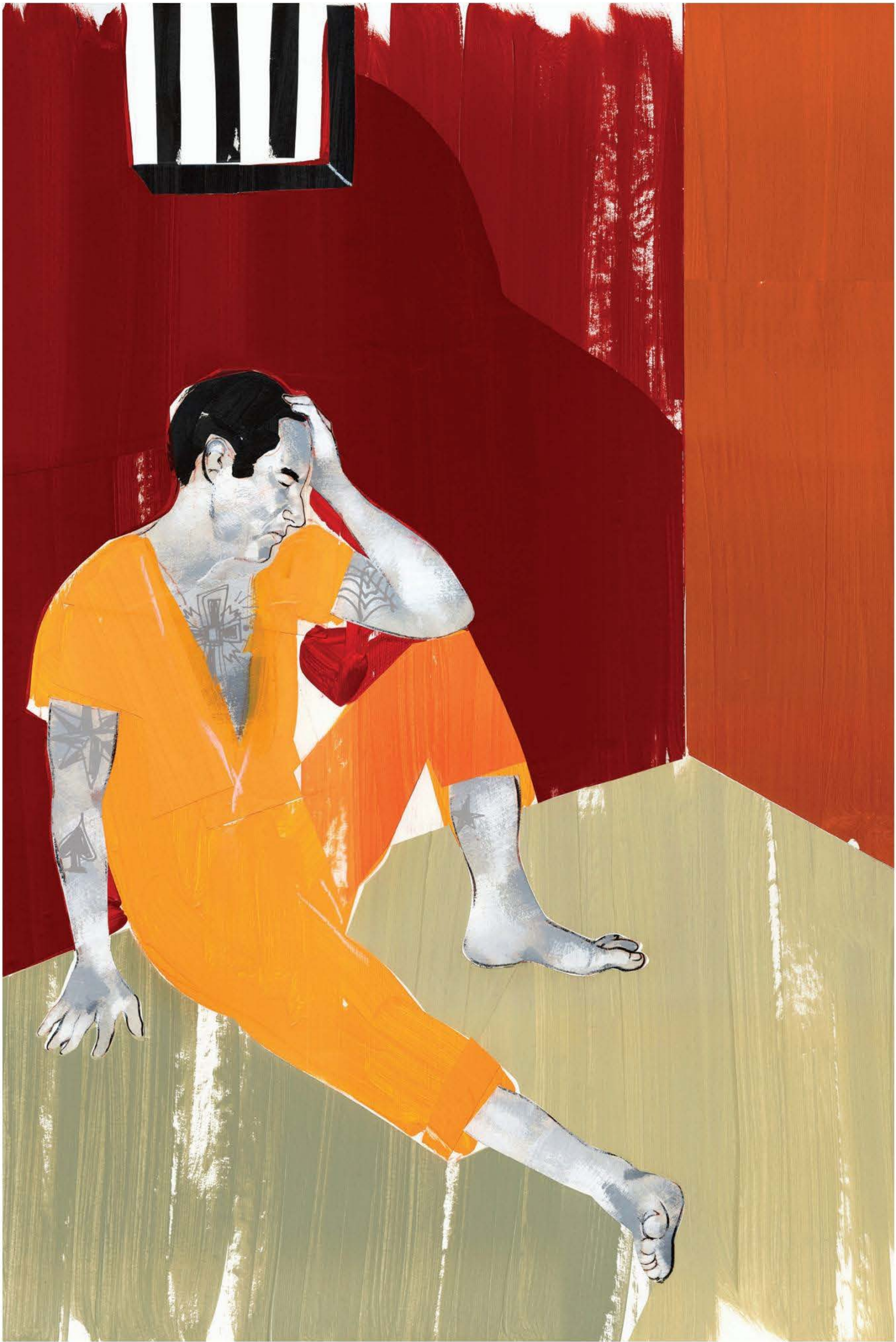
- » What programs and policies have contributed to the racial wealth gap, and in what ways?
- » What other factors have exacerbated the wealth gap in the twenty-first century? Give examples.

Critical Thinking

- » To what extent would narrowing the racial income gap contribute to narrowing the racial wealth gap?
- » How would asset-based social policies work in practice? Could they work?

Talking about Race

The overall wealth inequality between white families and African American or Latino families is staggering. Citing this issue is one way to broach the topic of racial inequality. After reading this chapter, have a discussion with family and friends, mentioning that white families have, on average, over ten times the wealth of African American or Latino families. Highlight historical reasons for this disparity. How would you respond to potential comments or questions about African Americans' or Latinos' spending habits or educational levels? What empirical evidence could you use to make your case?



Man sitting on floor of jail cell. Ilana Kohn. (Copyright Ilana kohn/Ikon Images)

Racism and the Criminal Justice System

As You Read

- 11.1 What factors explain the rise of mass incarceration in the United States?
- 11.2 How are disparities in the criminal justice system reflective of institutional racism?
- 11.3 How is the rise of mass incarceration tied to large-scale economic trends?
- 11.4 What are the collateral consequences of mass incarceration?

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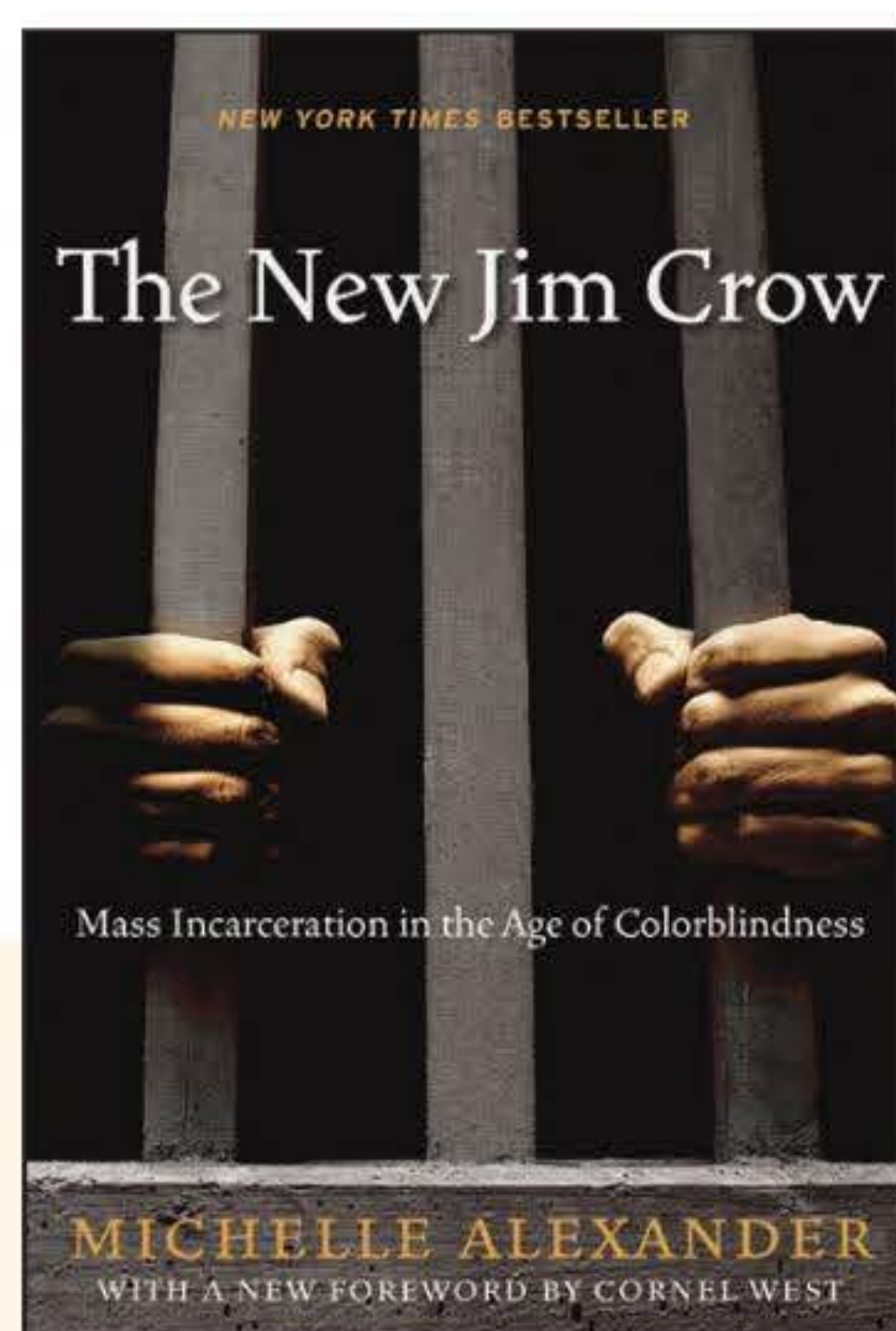
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In her book *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander argues that mass incarceration has replaced previous systems of social control in the United States. This excerpt uses the example of exclusion from the ballot box to explain how mass incarceration resembles prior efforts to exclude black men from citizenship.

Jarvious Cotton cannot vote. Like his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather, he has been denied the right to participate in our electoral democracy. Cotton's family tree tells the story of several generations of black men who were born in the United States but who were denied the most basic freedom that democracy promises—the freedom to vote for those who will make the rules and laws that govern one's life. Cotton's great-great-grandfather could not vote as a slave. His great-grandfather was beaten to death by the Ku Klux Klan for attempting to vote. His grandfather was prevented from voting by Klan intimidation. His father was barred from voting by poll taxes and literacy tests. Today, Jarvious Cotton cannot vote because he, like many black men in the United States, has been labeled a felon and is currently on parole.

Cotton's story illustrates, in many respects, the old adage "The more things change, the more they remain the same." In each generation, new tactics have been used for achieving the same goals—goals shared by the Founding Fathers. Denying African Americans citizenship was deemed essential to the formation of the original union. Hundreds of years later, America is still not an egalitarian democracy. The arguments and rationalizations that have been trotted out in support of racial exclusion and discrimination in its various forms have changed and evolved, but the outcome has remained largely the same. An extraordinary percentage of black men in the United States are legally barred from voting today, just as they have been throughout most of American history. They are also subject to legalized discrimination in employment, housing, education, public benefits, and jury service, just as their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents once were.

What has changed since the collapse of Jim Crow has less to do with the basic structure of our society than with the language we use to justify it. In the era of colorblindness, it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. So we don't. Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color "criminals" and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind. Today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all the ways that it was once legal

to discriminate against African Americans. Once you're labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination—employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service—are suddenly legal. As a criminal, you have scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a black man living in Alabama at the height of Jim Crow. We have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it.

Source: Alexander 2010, 1, 2.

Writing at the turn of the twentieth century, W. E. B. DuBois likened the prison system to “slavery in private hands” (1904, 2). He explained that with the end of slavery, the numbers of black convicts in the South rose substantially, in large part because of vagrancy laws passed in the aftermath of emancipation. Police officers often used vagrancy laws to arrest African Americans whom they perceived to be vagrants or drifters. African Americans’ testimonies in courts were largely ignored, and any accusation by whites could result in conviction. Southern states, however, were not able to build prisons fast enough to house these new convicts. Thus, a convict-lease system was born, whereby convicts could be leased to the highest bidder to work as slaves. This practice was legal because the Thirteenth Amendment allows forced labor as a punishment for crime. Notably, in our present system, prisons still can (and do) force prisoners to work for little or no pay.

Convict leasing was a system of both forced labor and social control. Today, prisons do not function to the same extent as a source of unpaid labor, yet the element of social control persists. One place we can see this is in the life-long stigma attached to being labeled a felon. As Michelle Alexander (2010) explains, this stigma makes various forms of racial discrimination legal. Felons face discrimination in housing, employment, and access to social services.

This chapter elaborates on these and other ways mass incarceration is a tool of social control, and how this crime control strategy has disproportionately affected people of color. The evidence presented makes it clear that mass incarceration not only is ineffective at preventing crime, but also has been particularly detrimental to communities of color across the United States. This chapter begins with a discussion of mass incarceration and then moves to an analysis of institutionalized racism in the criminal justice system. It concludes

with a consideration of the economic and collateral consequences of mass incarceration.

The United States has more people in prison than any other country in the world and today incarcerates people at a higher rate than at any other time in history. Our crime rate, however, is not higher than that of other countries or than it has been historically. Why, then, are so many Americans behind bars? The answer lies in the United States' use of mass incarceration as a strategy to reduce crime and particularly to fight illicit drug use. Yet, mass incarceration has not been effective at reducing crime and illicit drug use. It has, however, destroyed families and communities and exacerbated racial inequality in that the primary victims of intensified law enforcement efforts have been people of color.

MASS INCARCERATION IN THE UNITED STATES

An understanding of the racially disparate consequences of the criminal justice system in the United States must begin with an exploration of the uniqueness of this system. The United States is distinctive among wealthier nations in its liberal use of the prison system. While drugs such as marijuana and cocaine have been decriminalized in western Europe, the United States has enhanced the punishments for use of illicit drugs. Repeat offender laws and mandatory sentencing have meant that in the United States, many people



> In the United States, prisons are crowded with nonviolent offenders.

spend years behind bars for nonviolent crimes. Because of the racially disparate implementation and character of these laws, their impact is most visible in black and Latino communities.

The Rise of Mass Incarceration

Mass incarceration is a relatively new phenomenon in the United States and marks a divergence from the attitudes of the mid-twentieth century. At that time, Americans tended to view incarceration as an ineffective means of controlling crime and searched for other solutions to make communities safer. Prison was seen as a last resort, and accordingly, the Federal Bureau of Prisons planned to close large prisons in Kansas, Washington, and Georgia. In 1970, Congress voted to eliminate nearly all federal mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenders, as most Americans viewed drug addiction as a problem of public health, not criminal justice (Alexander 2010).

Just ten years later, this mindset—that drugs are a public health problem and prisons are barbaric—was pushed to the margins as a policy of mass incarceration took off. Many scholars attribute the start of this change to the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act, signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968. This law was the convergence of liberal and conservative anticrime agendas, as both parties realized that anticrime rhetoric could win elections. Parties began to compete with one another over who could be tougher on crime, and this competition led to a surge in incarceration rates (Murakawa 2014; Gottschalk 2016).

The U.S. incarceration rate was about 1 per 1,000 residents for almost the entire twentieth century until the 1970s. That rate doubled between 1972 and 1984, and again between 1984 and 1994. By the end of the twentieth century, the United States had an unprecedented number of inmates: over 2 million, more than ten times the number of U.S. inmates at any time prior to the 1970s. In 2016, the rate was more than 7 per 1,000, and there were “2.3 million people in 1,719 state prisons, 102 federal prisons, 942 juvenile correctional facilities, 3,283 local jails, and 79 Indian Country jails as well as in military prisons, immigration detention facilities, civil commitment centers, and prisons in the U.S. territories” (Wagner and Rabuy 2016). The increase in incarceration cannot be explained by a rise in crime, as crime rates have fluctuated independently of incarceration rates (Wacquant 2009; Gottschalk 2016). Incarceration rates soared because the laws changed, making a wider variety of crimes punishable by incarceration and lengthening sentences for those incarcerated. By 2015, 6,741,400 people were under correctional supervision in the United States, and 1,525,900 were incarcerated (Figures 11-1 and 11-2).

FIGURE 11-1.
Total U.S. Adult
Correctional Population,
2015

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics
(2016).

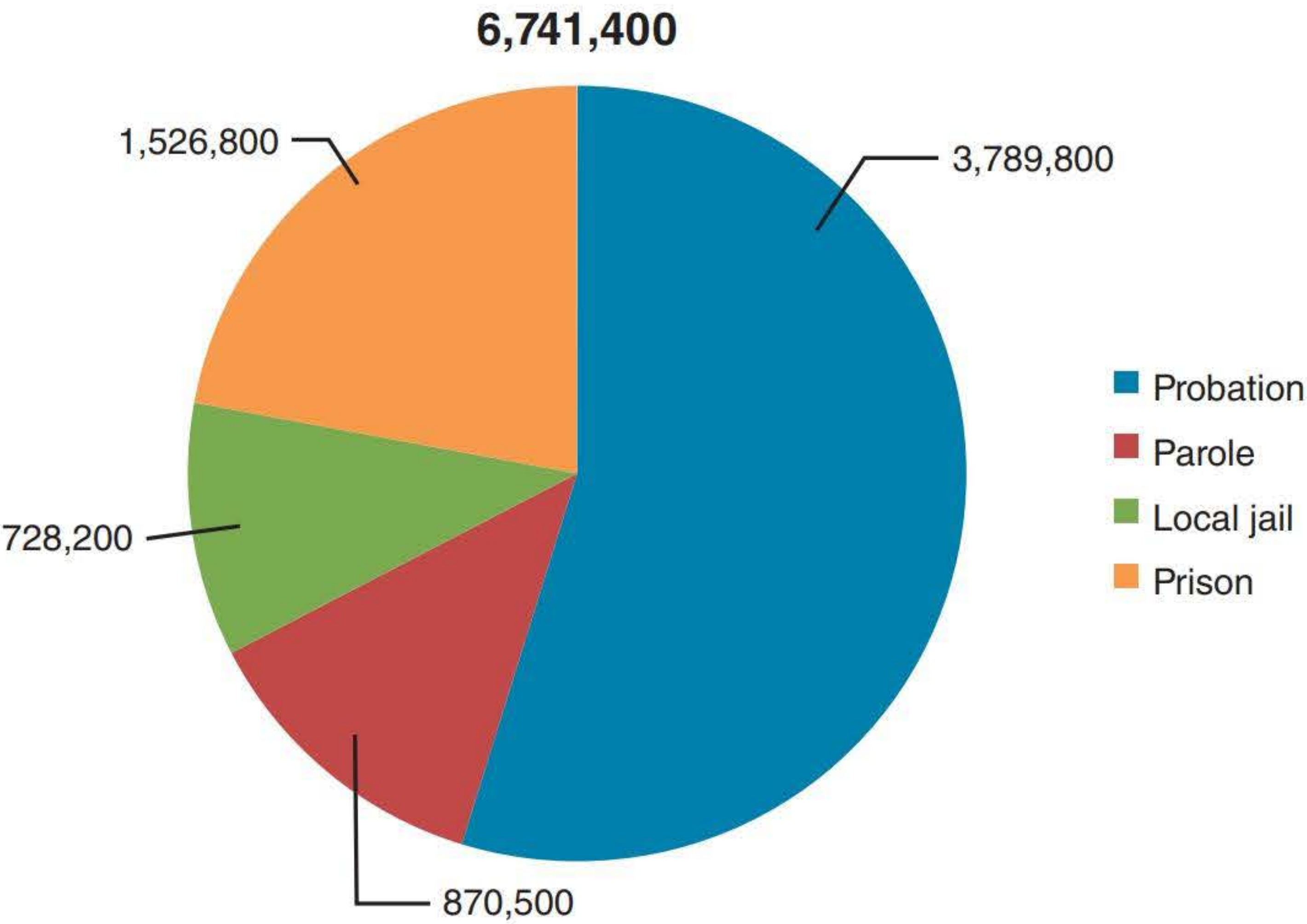
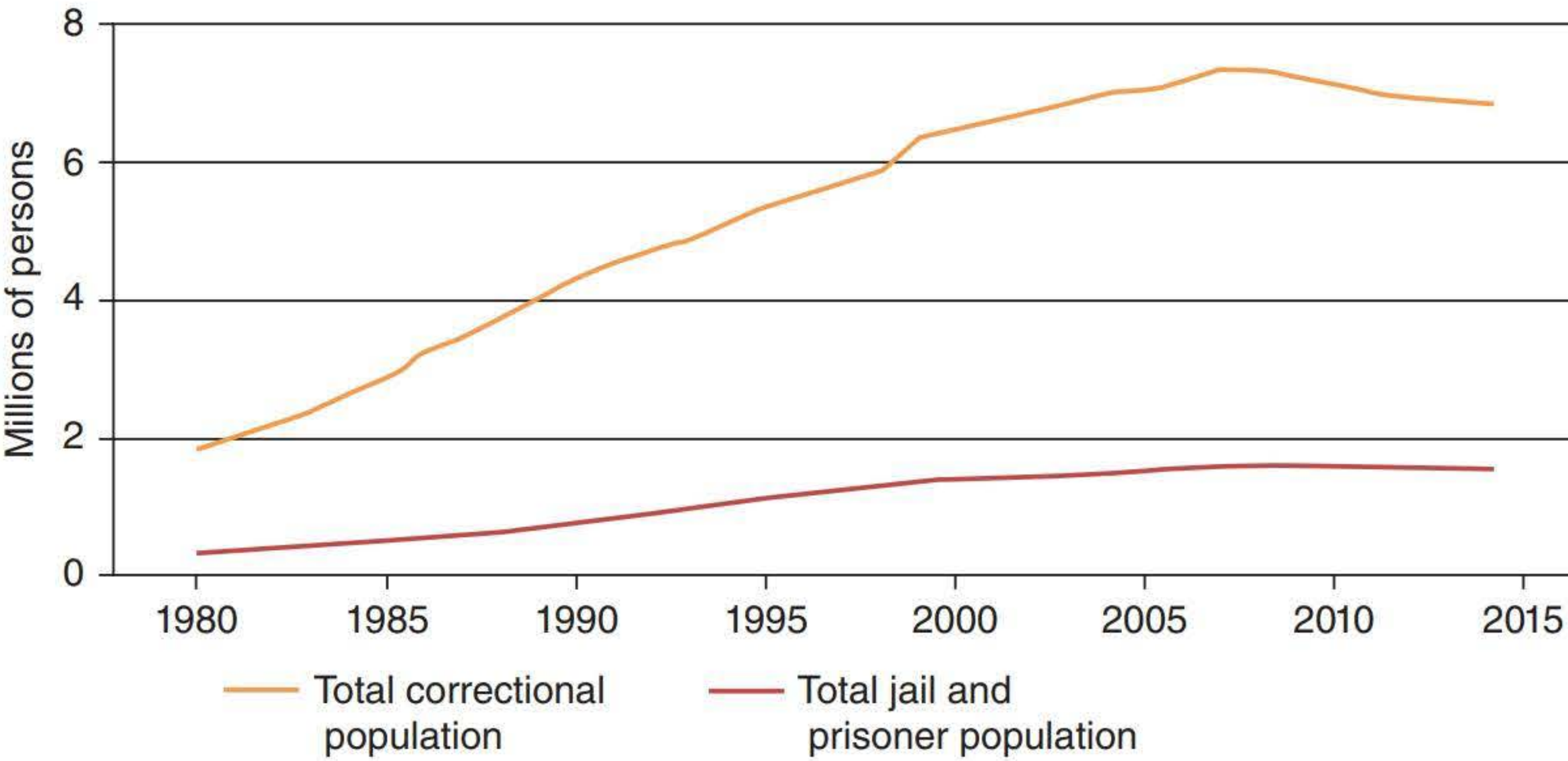


FIGURE 11-2.
Total U.S. Adult
Incarcerated Population,
1980–2015

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics
(2016).



Although the current incarceration rate is about 1 in 37 adults, it is the lowest since 1994 (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2016).

Mass Incarceration in a Global Context

The United States stands alone in its rate of incarceration. In 2017, 666 of every 100,000 U.S. residents were incarcerated—a rate nearly 8 times that of western Europe’s average rate of 84 per 100,000 residents (Walmsley 2017). The American prison population also dwarfs that of other, larger, countries, including China, in terms of sheer numbers. According to Walmsley (2017), in 2015, the United

States had 2,145,100 people behind bars. The next largest incarcerated population was in China, with 1,649,804 prisoners, followed by Brazil and Russia, with about 600,000 each. No other country incarcerates more than a half a million people. Iceland, for example, had only 124 people behind bars.

The so-called War on Drugs in the United States accounts for much of this disparity. In the United States, a moral panic erupted in the 1980s surrounding the emergence of crack cocaine, which led to harsh laws against selling or possessing crack and other narcotics. These laws in turn resulted in historically and globally unprecedented rates of imprisonment for drug sales and possession (Gottschalk 2016). In most other developed countries, a first-time drug offense leads to no more than six months in jail, and rehabilitation is more common than criminalization. In the United States, the typical mandatory minimum sentence in federal court for a first-time drug offense is five or ten years (Alexander 2010). At the state level, there are even more extreme examples: in Florida, illegal possession of 100 grams or more of the painkiller hydrocodone (one of the most frequently prescribed drugs in the United States) leads to a twenty-five-year mandatory minimum sentence (Riggs 2014). With more people in jail on drug charges for longer periods of time, the U.S. incarceration rate has risen far beyond that of other countries. As shown in Figure 11-3, Russia is the only European country with an incarceration rate remotely close to that of the United States. The United States has an

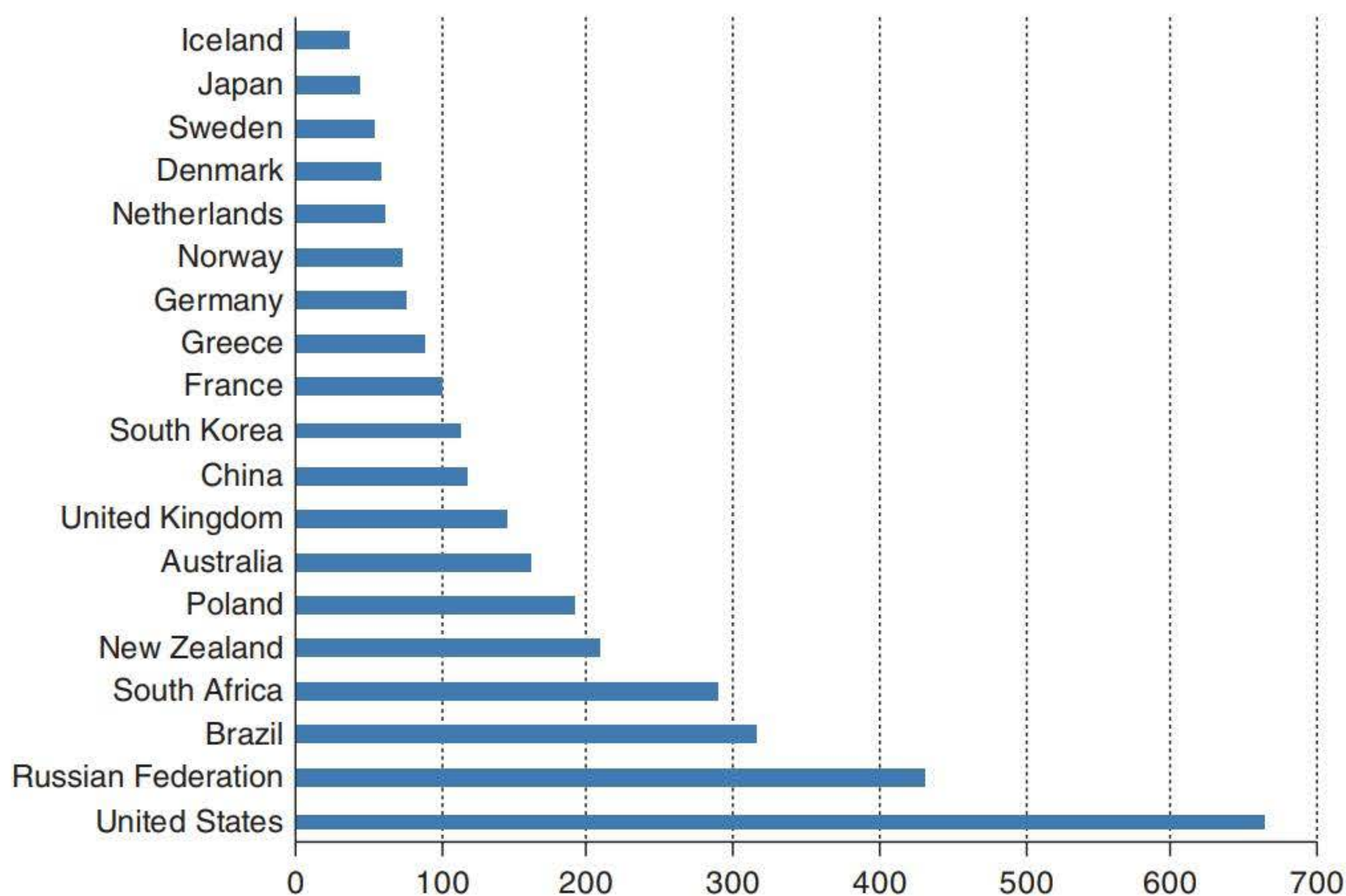


FIGURE 11-3.
**International Comparison
of Incarceration Rates
(per 100,000), 2017**

Source: Walmsley (2017).

Prisons in Germany and the Netherlands

Germany and the Netherlands incarcerate people at about one-tenth the rate of the United States. Moreover, their prisoners live in better conditions, and the primary aim of their corrections systems is social reintegration—not punishment. The prison systems in Germany and the Netherlands are designed to ensure that, when released, former convicts are able to reintegrate into society and live life without committing more crimes.

In these countries, incarceration is a strategy of last resort. Both rely heavily on punishments that do not require time behind bars, such as community service, fines, or diversion programs. The fines imposed are based on a convict's income. In 2010, in Germany, 70 percent of convictions involved the imposition of a fine, and only 6 percent involved incarceration. By comparison, in the United States, 21 percent of convictions involved fines, and 70 percent involved incarceration.

Typical sentences are also much longer in the United States. In 2012, 91 percent of prison sentences in the Netherlands were for twelve months or less, and less than 5 percent of Dutch sentences were for over two years. In the United States, in contrast, the average prison sentence is three years. Once released from prison, offenders in Germany and the Netherlands do not face any of the collateral consequences we see in the United States, such as voting or welfare restrictions.

In a report issued by the Vera Institute (Subramanian and Shames 2013), the authors recommend that the United States adopt some of these practices, particularly for nonviolent offenders, who make up the majority of the prison population in the United States.

Source: Subramanian and Shames 2013.

incarceration rate seven times higher than that of other developed countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Denmark (Walmsley 2013).

Race and Mass Incarceration

When we consider racial disparities in the U.S. incarceration rate, the picture becomes even more unsettling. In 2008, less than one-third of the population of the United States was black or Latino. In that same year, blacks and Latinos made up 58 percent of the nation's prison population (Sabol, West, and Cooper 2009). In 2014, the imprisonment rate of white males was 465 per every 100,000 in the population, as compared to 1,091 per 100,000 Latino males, and 2,274 per 100,000 black males. Black males were five times as likely to be incarcerated as white males in 2013 (Carson 2015). At a Glance 11.1 shows these rates by race and gender.

Much of the disparity is due to imprisonment for drug crimes, even though people of all races use and sell drugs at similar rates (Alexander 2010). This

Earl Washington

Earl is African American and was born in Washington, DC, in 1974. When he was six years old, his father went to prison. His mother, an in-home beautician, raised him on her own until she was murdered in 1987. He testified in court at the trial of his mother’s killer James Jones:

I am 15 years old. My mom died when I was 14. Ever since then I’ve been in and out of trouble. . . . I don’t care how much time you give Mr. Jones. I mean I care but if you give Mr. Jones all of the time in the world it won’t bring my mother back.

Orphaned at age 14, Earl went to live with his aging grandmother. In elementary school, he had been in the Gifted and Talented Program. Shortly after his mother died, however, he dropped out. Earl still remembers the last day he went to school, when he was 15. His friend saw him with a neon green notebook and asked him if he was a square. Earl said he wasn’t, and he did not go to school that day—or ever again. With no parents to guide him, he was led to the streets.

When Earl was 16, he was hanging out with some friends in his neighborhood. When a group of young men from another neighborhood came around, he and his friends decided to scare them away. What he did not expect was that one of his friends would shoot and kill one of the other young men.

Earl was arrested for this crime and, although he was only 16, charged as an adult with murder, armed robbery, assault with intent to kill, and a host of other charges. He was sentenced to 15 to 80 years in prison.

He had only finished the seventh grade. When he got to prison, however, he began reading books as a rite of passage, starting with *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Next, he read *The Confessions of Nat Turner* and *The African World Revolution*. In prison, he found that being smart garnered respect.

In 2009, when he was 35 years old, Earl was released from prison. He has been able to find work through a local nonprofit that helps formerly incarcerated people.

His story helps us see that in place of preventive interventions, incarceration has been the typical response to challenges faced by poor black communities.

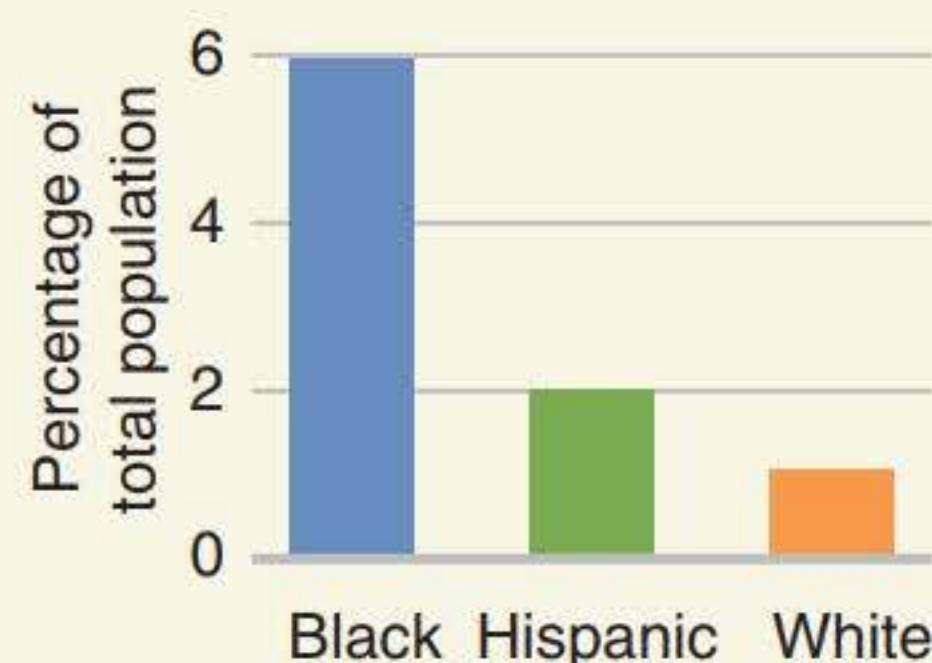
Source: Golash-Boza interview with “Earl Washington” (a pseudonym) 2016.



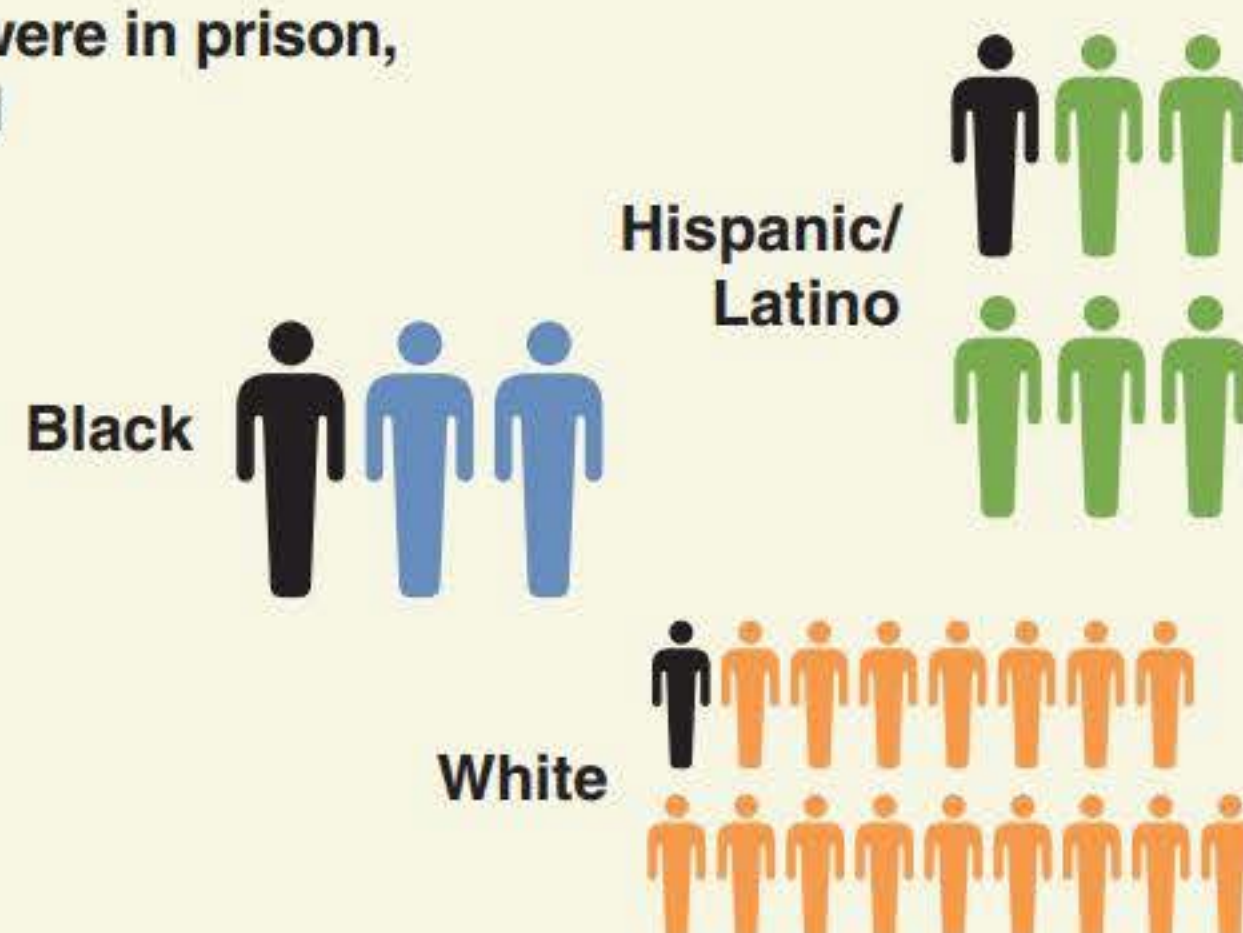
disparity has increased over time. In 1975, the ratio of black to white arrests for drug crimes was 2 to 1. By 1990, the ratio was 5 to 1, even though there is no evidence that blacks began to use or sell drugs at higher rates than whites during this period (Wacquant 2009).

AT A GLANCE 11.1 Criminal Justice Disparities

In 2015, 6% of all black males ages 30 to 39 were in prison, compared with 2% of Hispanic/Latino males and 1% of white males in the same age group



Data from BJS 2016

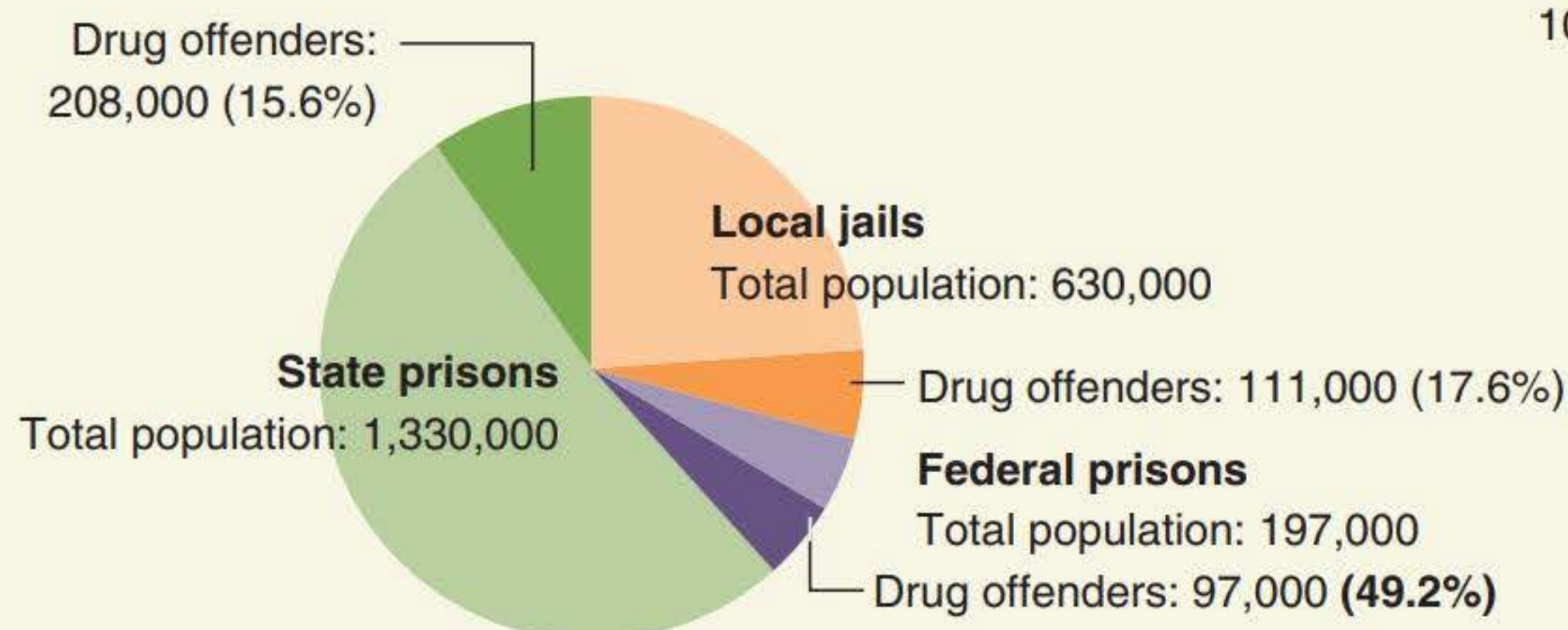


- One in 3 black males in the United States will be in prison at some point in their life, compared with
- One in 6 Hispanic/Latino males and
- One in 17 white males.

Data from The Sentencing Project 2013

Percentage of Drug Offenders at Each Level of Incarceration

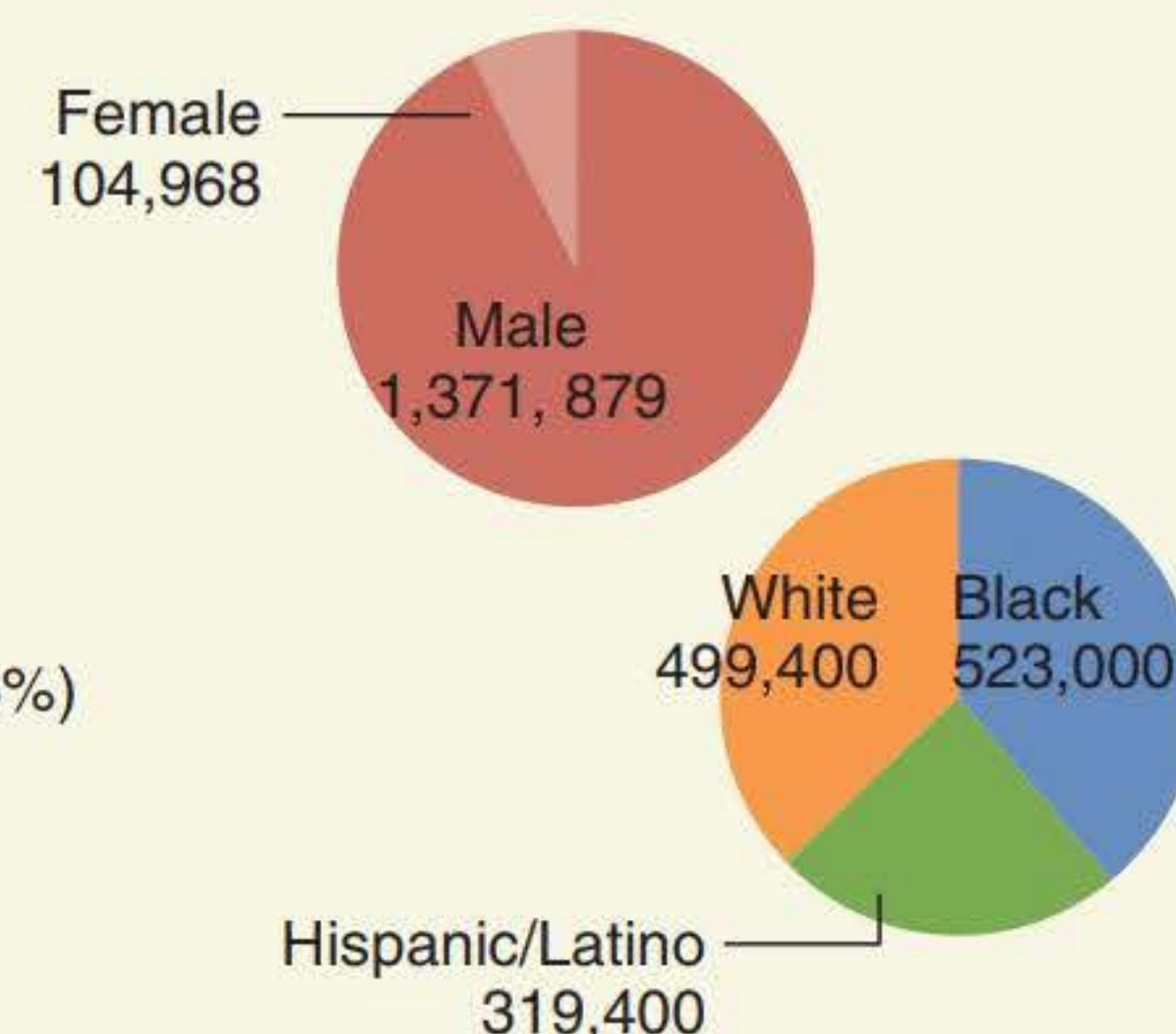
At the federal level, nearly half of all inmates are in prison for nonviolent drug offenses. Overall, drug-related offenses account for one-fifth of the incarcerated population.



Data from Prison Policy Initiative 2017

Number of Sentenced Inmates, 2015

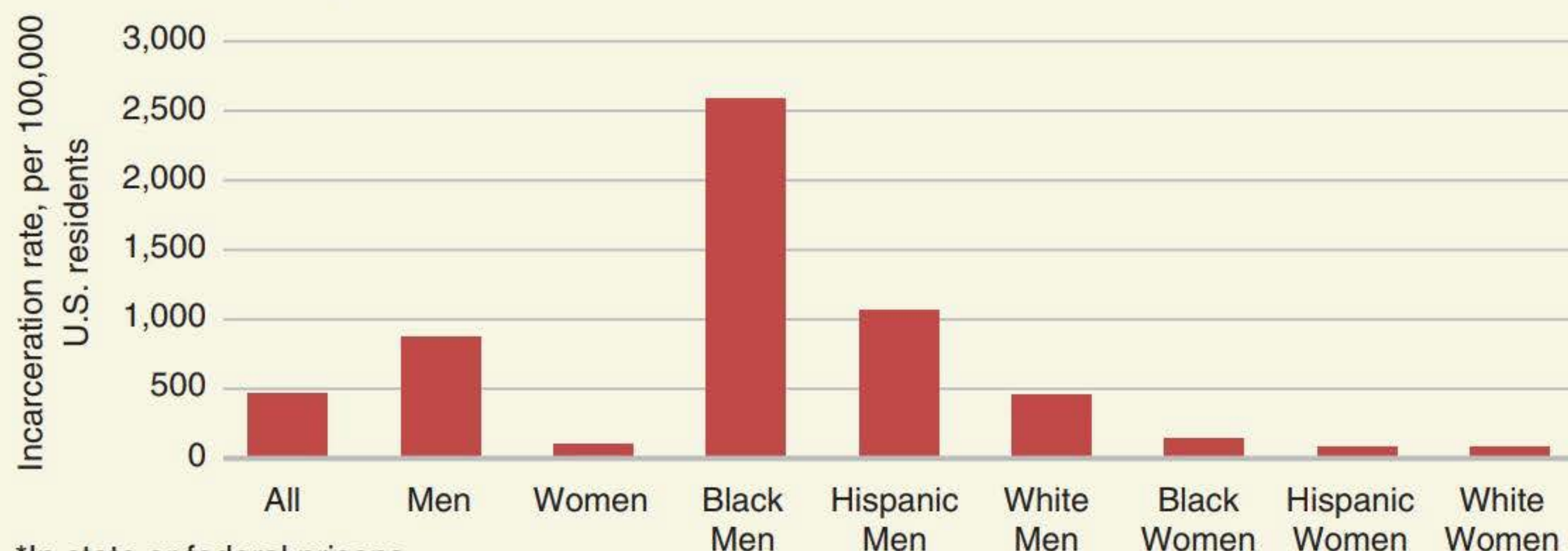
Total: 1,476,847



Data from BJS 2016

Rate of Incarceration* per 100,000 U.S. Residents, 2015, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Much of the racial/ethnic disparity is due to imprisonment for drug crimes, even though people of all races use and sell drugs at similar rates (Alexander 2010).



*In state or federal prisons.

Data from BJS 2016

By the end of the twentieth century, black men were seven times more likely than white men to go to prison. Over the course of a black man's life, he is more likely to go to prison than to get a bachelor's degree or join the military. Whereas a white man is ten times more likely to get a college degree than to go to prison, a black man is nearly twice as likely to end up in prison than to finish college. Imprisonment has become an expected life outcome for some black men: 1 in every 3 black males in the United States will be in prison at some point in his life, compared with 1 in every 6 Latino males, and 1 in every 17 white males (The Sentencing Project 2013). The number of incarcerated women has also increased over the past few decades—at a rate 50 percent higher than that of men since 1980 (The Sentencing Project 2016).

The Inefficacy of Mass Incarceration

Incarceration has emerged as the most popular crime control strategy in the United States. However, there is limited evidence that incarceration is an effective strategy to control crime, according to state-level incarceration trends. Between 1998 and 2003, some states greatly increased the number of people they sent to prison, while other states did not. The average decrease in crime rates in these states, however, was similar. Additionally, the states with higher increases in incarceration did not experience more substantial declines in their crime rates (King, Mauer, and Young 2005).

Incarceration has had a limited impact on crime rates for two reasons. First, it is just one of many factors that influence crime rates: changes in the economy, fluctuations in the drug market, and community-level responses often have more pronounced effects. Second, there are diminishing returns from incarceration: incarcerating repeat violent offenders takes them off the streets and thus reduces crime, whereas incarcerating nonviolent offenders has a minimal effect on crime rates (King et al. 2005).

The rates of incarceration began to increase in the 1970s, during a time when violent and property crime rates were high. Even though crime rates began to fall in 1993, incarceration rates and populations continued to rise for another decade. Some of the most draconian laws were passed in the mid-1990s, after crime rates had started falling. Figures 11-4 and 11-5 provide a visual representation of how violent crime and property crime rates have decreased since 1993.

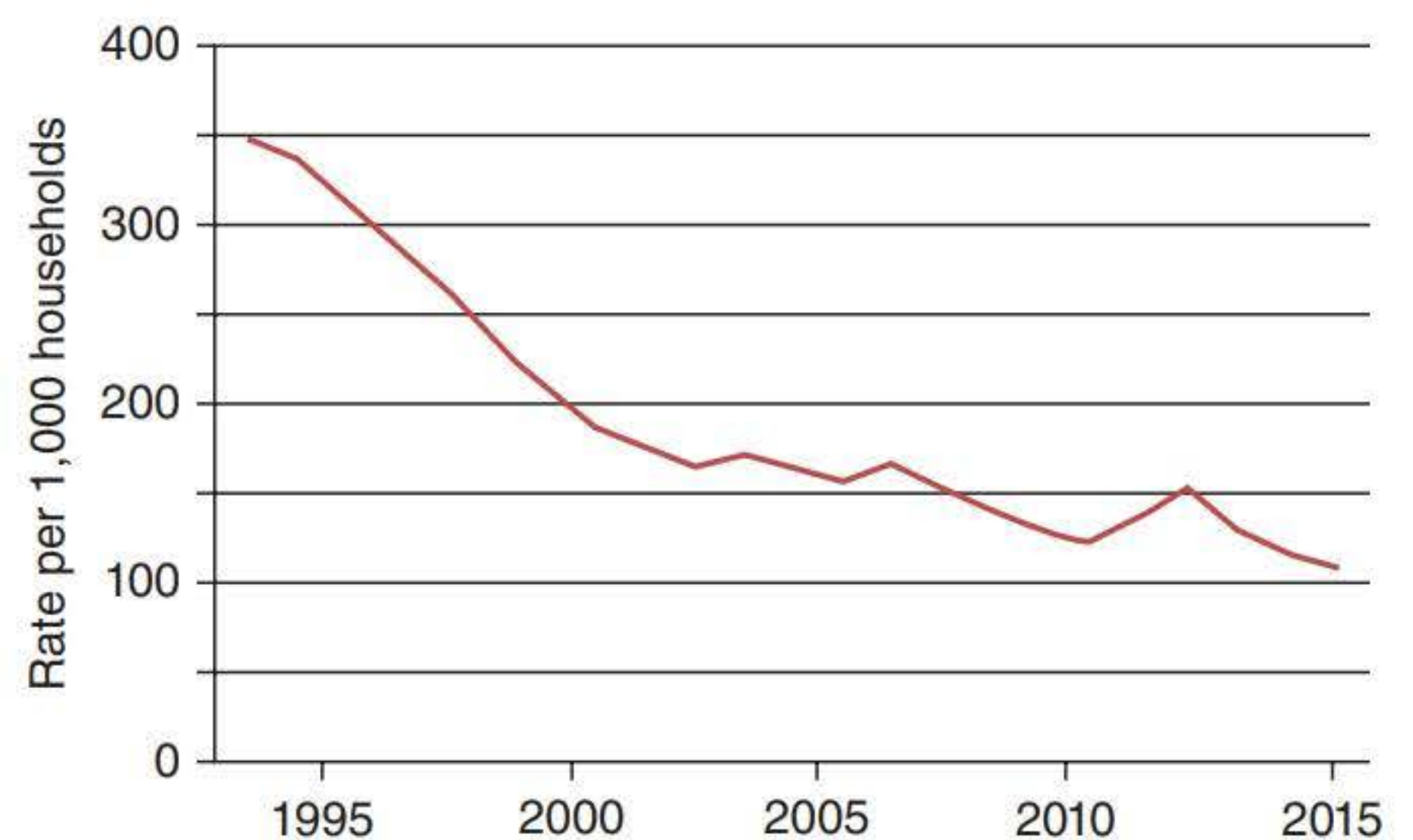


FIGURE 11-4.
Property Victimization Rate, 1993–2015

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics (2016).

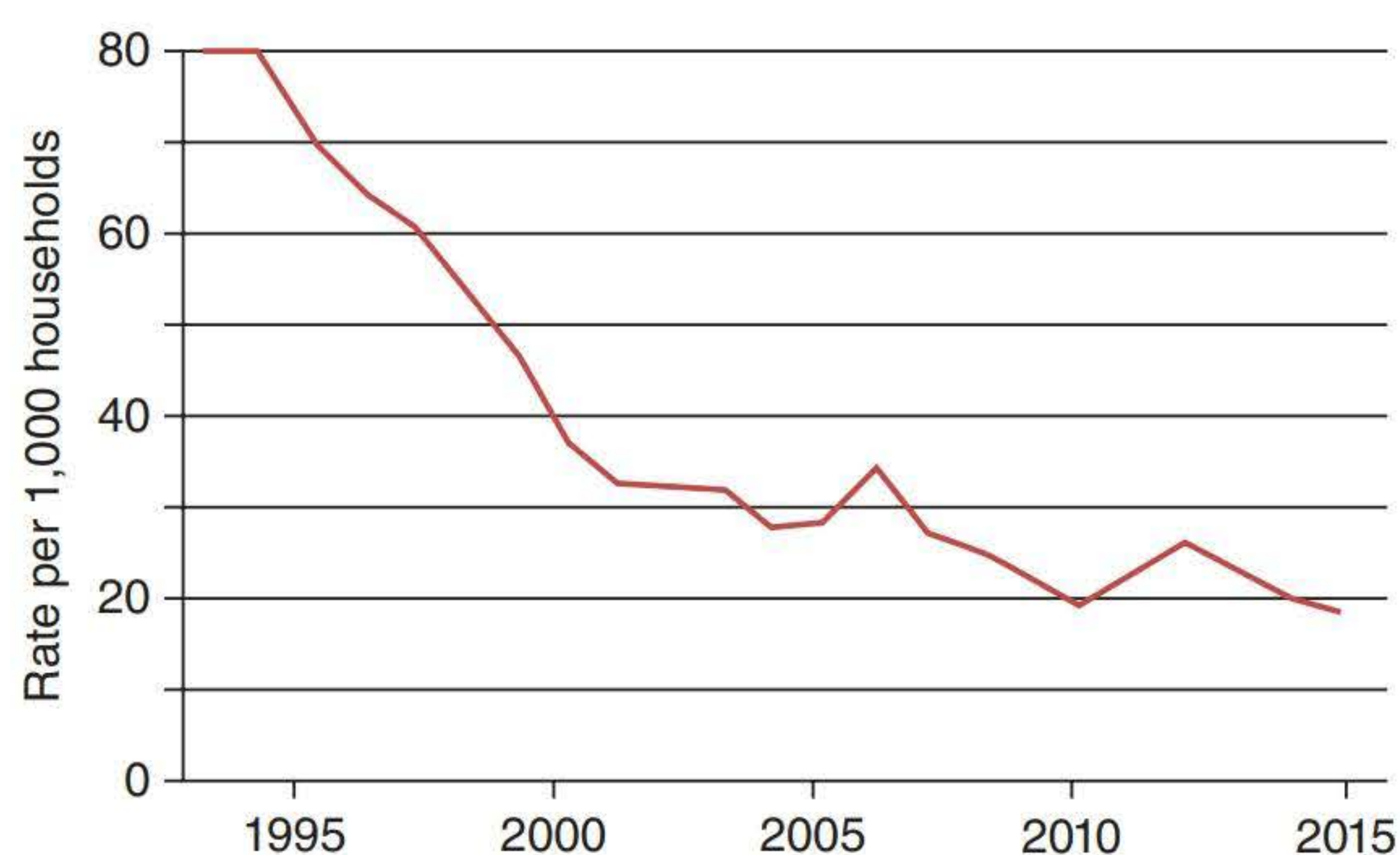


FIGURE 11-5.
Violent Victimization Rate, 1993–2015

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics (2016).

Despite the low efficacy of imprisoning non-violent offenders, this is the segment of the prison population that has grown the fastest, and drug arrests are on the rise. Between 1970 and 2000, incarceration rates in the United States increased five-fold, in large part because of legislation designed to fight drugs. As such, drug offenders represent “the most substantial source of growth in incarceration in recent decades, rising from 40,000 persons in prison and jail in 1980 to 450,000 today” (King et al. 2005, 6). The irony is that the incarceration of drug offenders is a highly ineffective way to reduce the amount of illegal drugs sold in the United States. When street-level drug sellers are incarcerated, they are

quickly replaced by other sellers, since what drives the drug market is demand for drugs. Incarcerating large numbers of drug offenders has not ameliorated the drug problem in the United States (King et al. 2005).

Despite the lack of evidence that increased incarceration rates lead to decreased crime (Lynch 1999), we continue to build prisons and imprison more people (Gilmore 2007). Nor have we changed our policies in response to substantial evidence that being tough on crime does not lead to safer communities. Politicians who invest money in the criminal justice system can claim to their constituents that they are serious about law enforcement. This strategy, creating the impression that they have the crime victims’ interests at heart, has become essential for winning electoral campaigns (Simon 2007). In 1998, political activist and scholar Angela Davis pointed out: “Mass incarceration is not a solution to unemployment, nor is it a solution to the vast array of social problems that are hidden away in a rapidly growing network of prisons and jails. However, the great majority of people have been tricked into believing in the efficacy of imprisonment, even though the historical record clearly demonstrates that prisons do not work” (1998, 3). The emergence of mass incarceration as a solution to social ills can be attributed primarily to the War on Drugs, as we will see.

Mass Incarceration and the War on Drugs

To understand why black men are imprisoned at seven times the rate of white men and why the United States imprisons more people than any other country in the world requires a consideration of the War on Drugs, which is largely

responsible for the explosion in incarceration rates since 1980. Whereas only 41,000 people were behind bars for a drug offense in 1980, the figure had risen astronomically to about half a million in 2010 (Alexander 2010). Many people are incarcerated for low-level drug crimes. Between 1993 and 2011, thirty million people were arrested for drug crimes. About 80 percent of these arrests were for drug possession, and only 20 percent were for drug sales (Rothwell 2016; Figures 11-6 and 11-7).

Zealous enforcement of drug laws disproportionately affects people of color, even though whites are more likely to use and sell drugs. In the United States, black men are sent to prison on drug charges at thirteen times the rate of white men, yet five times as many whites as blacks use illegal drugs (Alexander 2010). According to results from the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, white youth aged twelve to seventeen are more likely than blacks to have sold illegal drugs (Alexander 2010). These data are based on self-reports, yet they are confirmed by more objective data: white youth are about three times as likely as their African American counterparts to end up in an emergency room for drug-related emergencies. Whites who use and abuse drugs most often buy their drugs from white sellers, just as blacks who use drugs buy from black sellers (Alexander 2010).

Law enforcement agents cannot fully enforce drug laws because drug use and selling are too widespread. More than half of the people in the United States have violated drug laws at some point in their lives, yet relatively few have been punished for it. In any given year, about 10 percent of American adults violate drug laws. As law enforcement agents have neither the resources nor the mandate to prosecute every lawbreaker, they must be strategic with their resources and enforcement tactics. Because of stereotypes that drug law violators are black, combined with the relatively weak political power of poor black communities, law enforcement agents have targeted open-air drug markets in poor black communities instead of the places where whites use and sell drugs (Alexander 2010).

Crack cocaine is often portrayed as public enemy number one in the War on Drugs. It is thus remarkable that crack cocaine hit the streets in 1985—three years before the War on Drugs began, in 1982. When President Ronald Reagan officially declared the War on Drugs, less than 2 percent of Americans viewed drugs as the most important problem facing the nation. Public opinion changed drastically after the War on Drugs was launched in 1982, and crack cocaine became an urban problem in 1985. A media frenzy broke out over the problems of crackheads, crack babies, and crackwhores. The media often

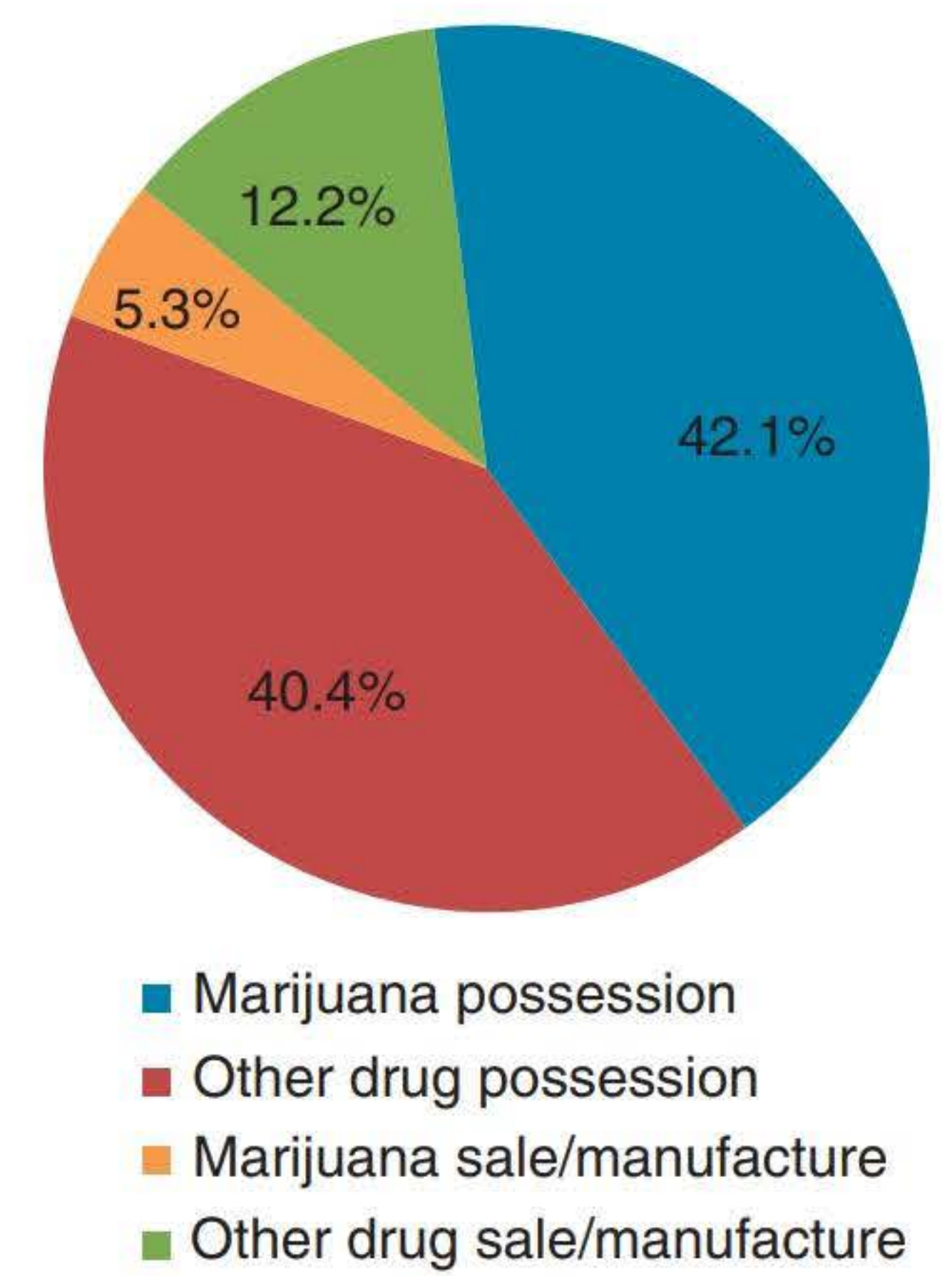


FIGURE 11-6.
Reasons for Drug Arrests

Source: Alexander (2010).

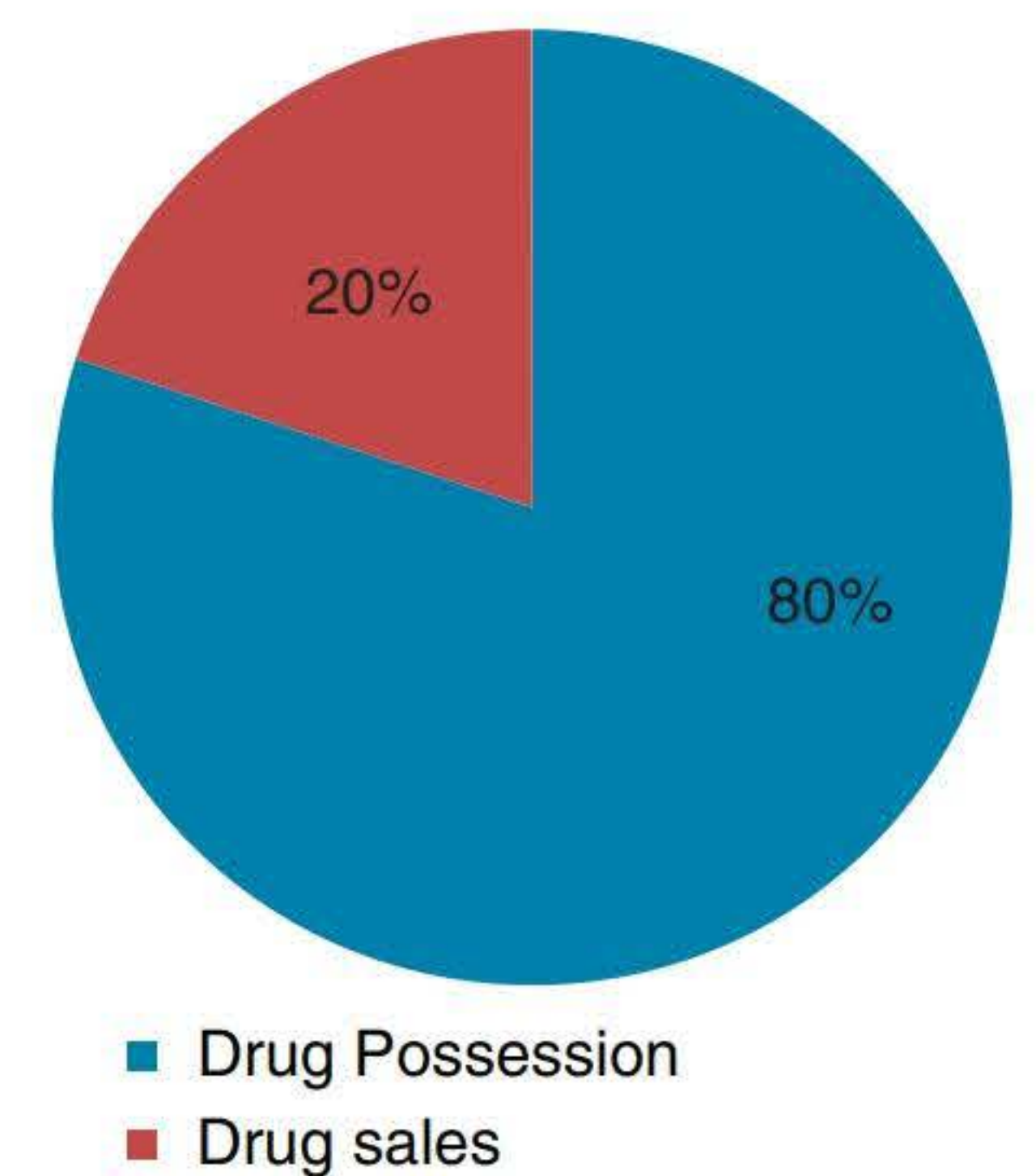


FIGURE 11-7.
Drug Sales Versus Drug Possession Arrests, 1993–2011

Source: Rothwell (2016).

racialized the crack problem as a black problem by showing images of black people in connection with stories about crack cocaine (Alexander 2010).

The penalties that emerged for possession and sale of crack cocaine were the harshest drug penalties in U.S. history. When the Anti-Drug Abuse Act was passed in 1988, it meted out a five-year mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack. This was unprecedented: prior to this legislation, one year of imprisonment was the maximum sentence one could receive for possession of any amount of any drug (Alexander 2010). Along with the federal laws, states began to pass stricter laws, including “three strikes,” “truth in sentencing,” and “zero tolerance” legislation, which led to a huge upswing in incarceration rates. By 1996, nearly three-quarters of all people admitted to state prisons were nonviolent offenders with relatively minor convictions (Ladipo 2001).

At the federal level, three major laws were passed in 1984, 1986, and 1988 that marked the beginning of a new era in criminal justice:

- The **1984 Crime Control Act** established mandatory minimum sentences and eliminated federal parole.
- The **Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986** imposed even more mandatory minimum sentences. Most significantly, it set a five-year mandatory minimum sentence for offenses involving 100 grams of heroin, 500 grams of cocaine, or 5 grams of crack cocaine.
- The **Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988** included a five-year mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack cocaine, with no evidence of intent to sell. Prior to 1988, one year of imprisonment had been the maximum penalty for possession of any amount of any drug.

Race, Class, Gender, and Mass Incarceration

Mass incarceration has led to the filling of jails with black and Latino working-class and poor men. Mass incarceration is thus evidently raced, classed, and gendered. However, an intersectional analysis requires consideration not only of the numbers of blacks, Latinos, and men behind bars, but also of how mass incarceration affects people in distinct social locations differently. When we look at women, for example, it becomes clear that there are three specific ways that mass incarceration has directly affected women in distinct ways from men:

1. Very few women were behind bars prior to 1970, so incarceration is a relatively new phenomenon for women. Incarceration rates for women

rose dramatically in the context of the War on Drugs. Between 1970 and 1997, the population of women in prison rose more than twelve-fold, from 5,600 to 75,000. With the addition of 35,000 more women in jails, there were about 100,000 women incarcerated by the late 1990s (Covington and Bloom 2003). By 2015, the sum total of women in prison or jails, on probation, or on parole was 1,249,900 (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2016). Similar to men, women of color are incarcerated at a higher rate than white women. In 1990, black women were three times as likely as white women to be incarcerated, and Latina women were twice as likely (Zatz 2000).

2. Women are more likely than men to have been the primary caregivers prior to being incarcerated. This means that the incarceration of women often has a more direct and immediate effect on their children.
3. Women are more likely than men to have experienced physical or sexual abuse. One study found that nearly 80 percent of women prisoners had experienced some form of abuse in their lives. Many of the women serving time for violent crimes are in jail for retaliating against their abuser (Covington and Bloom 2003).

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Racial disparities in incarceration rates are a classic example of institutional racism. As discussed in Chapter Four, institutional racism is the creation of racial disparities as a result of institutional practices and policies that distribute resources, power, and advantages to whites. Racial inequalities in law enforcement are institutionalized at every level of the criminal justice process, from stops to arrests to charges to sentencing to release. Blacks and Latinos are more likely to be arrested than whites. They are more likely to be charged, more likely to be convicted, more likely to be given a longer sentence, and more likely to face the death penalty. The cumulative effect of these disparities at each stage of the process creates a situation in which black men are seven times more likely than white men to be put behind bars.

Racial Profiling

The propensity of police officers to pull over African Americans more often than whites is so prevalent that the moniker “driving while black” has emerged to explain this phenomenon. In the early 1990s, statistician John Lamberth (1994) conducted a detailed investigation of police stops on the New Jersey Turnpike. This study provided convincing evidence that police officers engage

racial profiling The use of race or ethnicity as grounds for suspicion.

in **racial profiling**, the use of race or ethnicity as grounds for suspicion. Lamberth's study revealed that only 13 percent of all cars on the New Jersey Turnpike had a black driver or passenger but that 35 percent of those stopped on the turnpike were black, and 73.2 percent of those arrested were black. Blacks were much more likely than whites to be stopped, even though blacks and whites violated traffic laws at almost exactly the same rate. Studies in other states have revealed similar results: police officers are more likely to pull over African American drivers than white drivers. In Maryland, an American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) study found that 75 percent of drivers along Interstate 95 were white, but between January 1995 and September 1996, 73 percent of the motorists that Maryland state police searched were black (Harris 1999). Racial profiling also extends to Hispanics: a study in Volusia County in Florida, for example, revealed that blacks and Hispanics were more likely to be pulled over and much more likely to be searched once pulled over than whites (Mauer 1999).

In response to these findings that police officers engage in racial profiling, state legislatures began to mandate that police departments collect more data. Frank R. Baumgartner, Leah Christiani, Derek A. Epp, Kevin Roach, and Kelsey Shoub (2017) were thus able to analyze publicly available information about racial profiling from hundreds of police agencies across 13 states. Baumgartner and his colleagues focused their analysis on police searches following a traffic stop. They wanted to know the likelihood that a motorist would be searched by the police after being pulled over and how that likelihood varies depending on the race of the driver. After analyzing 55 million stops and 1.9 million searches, they found that police officers search an average of 3.2 percent of white drivers that they stop, compared with 7.6 percent of black drivers and 8.7 percent of Hispanic or Latino drivers. The Evanston (Illinois) Police Department had the greatest disparity in its stops of black and white drivers: it was seven times more likely to search a black driver than a white driver. The Cook County (Chicago metropolitan area) Sheriff's Department had the single largest racial disparity: its police officers were 18 times more likely to search a Hispanic or Latino driver than a white driver. Of the 132 agencies surveyed, only 9 of them were less likely to search black drivers than white drivers.

Racial profiling happens on street corners as well as highways, where police officers stop and frisk blacks and Latinos much more frequently than they do whites. African Americans make up 13 percent of the U.S. population and 14 percent of illegal drug users in this country. However, they account for 37 percent of the people arrested for drug offenses, in part because they are more likely to be stopped and frisked than whites (Mauer 2009). In New York



< Racial profiling leads to disparate treatment of whites, blacks, and Latinos by police agencies.

City, for example, one study found that blacks account for half of all people stopped by the police, even though they are only a quarter of the New York City population (Gelman, Fagan, and Kiss 2007). Once stopped, New York police officers are more likely to frisk blacks and Latinos than whites. According to data provided by the New York Police Department (NYPD), between 1998 and 2008, NYPD officers frisked 85 percent of blacks and Latinos that they stopped, compared with only 8 percent of whites (New York City Bar 2013). A study in Seattle revealed similar results. Seventy percent of people in Seattle are white, and the majority of those who sell and use drugs in Seattle are white. However, blacks represent nearly two-thirds of all those arrested for drug offenses (Barnes and Chang 2012). This is primarily because police officers tend to target predominantly black neighborhoods in criminal law enforcement operations.

Racial profiling leads to disparate treatment of whites, blacks, and Latinos by police agencies. It also can have deadly consequences, as in the high-profile cases of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, and Sandra Bland. Each of these cases began with police stopping or confronting a black person. Sandra Bland, whose story is told in the Voices sidebar in this section, was pulled over after she failed to use her turn signal. Although it is difficult to establish discriminatory treatment in particular situations, blacks and Latinos are more likely than whites to be stopped by police (Baumgartner et al. 2017).

Sandy Bland

Sandra Annette Bland—who went by Sandy—was born in 1987, in Chicago. After completing high school, she received a music scholarship at Prairie View A&M University, a historically black university in Waller County, Texas. She graduated in 2009 with a degree in animal science.

Sandy secured a low-paying job in nearby Houston after graduating.

Driving around Houston, she racked up a series of traffic tickets. When she was unable to pay them, a warrant was issued for her arrest. She later was arrested for marijuana possession and was sentenced to 30 days in jail. She did that time in addition to several days for the traffic tickets.

After that experience, Sandy moved back to Illinois, where she worked in several low-paying jobs. While in Illinois, she battled depression, yet managed to hold on to work most of the time.

In July 2015, Sandy applied for a job at Prairie View A&M University. When she was called for an interview, she left her job in Chicago and drove down to Texas. On July 10, she signed the papers for her new job. On her way home, Texas state trooper Brian Encinia pulled her over.

Encinia claims that he pulled Sandy over because she had failed to use her turn signal. Sandy claims she was trying to move out of the way so that he could pass.

As Encinia was writing her ticket, he asked her to put out her cigarette. Sandy, annoyed that she was getting a ticket for such a minor traffic offense, insisted that she did not have to put out her cigarette as she was in her own car.

At that point, Encinia asked her to get out of her car. She refused, saying that he did not have the right. Encinia opened her car door and told her that if she did not step out, he would remove her. He then began to use force against her while Sandy insisted that he did not have the right to remove her from her car. Encinia then stated she was under arrest. When she asked what for, he did not respond but pulled a gun and yelled that she had to get out of the car. At that point, she stepped out.



A protestor holds a sign in remembrance of Sandra Bland.



Sandy was arrested and taken to the jail. As she did not have funds for bail, she remained there. Three days later, she was found dead in her cell, and her death was labeled a suicide.

Encinia was indicted for perjury because a grand jury decided he had lied when he said he forced Sandy to get out of the car to conduct a safe traffic investigation. He was fired by the Texas Department of Public Safety after the indictment.

The family of Sandra Bland settled a wrongful death lawsuit against officials in Waller County for \$1.9 million.

Sources: Chammah 2016; *Chicago Tribune* 2016; Nathan 2016.

Sentencing Disparities

Blacks and Latinos are more likely to be arrested than whites. An arrest is just the first point of entry into the criminal justice system, where blacks and Latinos are likely to continue to find the odds stacked against them. A recent study of federal offenders, for example, found that blacks and Latinos are more likely to be sentenced to longer prison terms than whites, even after taking into account the severity of the charges. In contrast, whites are more likely than blacks to get no prison time when that option is available. This study also found that the disparities between sentences for whites and nonwhites is most evident in drug-trafficking cases (Mustard 2001).

Although more whites are convicted of drug felonies than blacks, more blacks are admitted to prison. This disparity is related to the differing severity of sentences that blacks and whites receive in courts of law. Overall, blacks are sent to prison on drug charges at nearly twelve times the rate of whites, even though, as mentioned previously, blacks and whites use and sell drugs at about the same rates (Alexander 2010). One of the main reasons for this disparity is that police officers target open-air drug markets in black neighborhoods and yet often ignore the widespread usage of narcotics in primarily white suburban areas and on college campuses. Because whites are less likely to be arrested for drug offenses, they are less likely to be charged, convicted, or sentenced to prison for drug offenses. This means that harsh penalties for drug offenses have had a disproportionate impact on people of color.

As the War on Drugs advanced in the 1980s, discretionary power was increasingly taken away from judges out of fear they might be soft on crime. One of the trends in sentencing reform has been the introduction of mandatory minimum sentences and mandatory guidelines for calculating prison

sentences (Simon 2007). The implementation of mandatory prison terms for certain drug crimes has had a disproportionate impact on African Americans. The 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act established mandatory prison terms of five years for possession or sale of 5 grams of crack cocaine or 500 grams of powder cocaine. This sentencing disparity is emblematic of how drug law enforcement has meted out different sentences to blacks and whites.

Between 1986 and 2006, more than 80 percent of people sentenced to prison for crack cocaine were black (Mauer 2007). This statistic is especially remarkable when we consider that two-thirds of regular crack cocaine users are either white or Latino (Mauer 2009). The 1986 act is one of many pieces of legislation that set mandatory minimum sentences, which have disproportionately affected African Americans. Blacks are 21 percent more likely than whites to receive a mandatory minimum sentence when facing an eligible charge, and black drug defendants are 20 percent more likely than white drug defendants to be sentenced to prison (Mauer 2009).

The Ultimate Sentence: Racial Disparities in the Death Penalty

As a black man accused of killing a white man, Troy Davis had the odds against him. A study conducted in California found that people accused of killing whites are over three times more likely to be sentenced to death than those who kill African Americans (American Civil Liberties Union 2003). Another study examined all death penalty cases since 1977, when the death penalty was reinstated, and found that although whites accounted for about half of all murder victims, 80 percent of all death penalty cases involved white victims (American Civil Liberties Union 2003). In addition, between 1976 and 2002, only twelve people were executed for crimes in which the defendant was white and the victim black, compared with the 178 black defendants who were executed after having been convicted of killing a white person (American Civil Liberties Union 2003). Between 1976 and 2017, over 75 percent of murder victims in death penalty cases were white, even though only about half of all murder victims are white. In that same period, more than 1,400 people were executed in the United States, and 34 percent of them were African American. Remarkably, more than 155 people were released from death row in that period after being found innocent (Death Penalty Information Center, 2017).

In recent years, the death penalty has come under increasing scrutiny. New Mexico and New Jersey have abolished the death penalty, and death sentences have decreased since their peak in the 1990s. In addition, the U.S. Supreme Court has abolished the death penalty for minors and mentally retarded people (Amnesty International 2010).

Troy Davis

On September 21, 2011, the state of Georgia executed Troy Davis, an African American man who was raised in Savannah, Georgia, where he was a coach for the Savannah Police Athletic League. His father was a former police officer.

In 1991, Troy Davis was convicted of the murder of Mark MacPhail, a white off-duty police officer. There is no physical evidence connecting Davis to the crime scene. A murder weapon has never been found. The conviction is based primarily on eyewitness accounts, even though seven of the nine witnesses who were not police officers have recanted their testimonies since

Davis's original conviction. Amnesty International, the NAACP, and several other groups demanded clemency. Several prominent leaders, including Jimmy Carter, Desmond Tutu, and Pope Benedict XVI, called for a closer examination of the evidence.

Supporters of Troy Davis protested outside of the execution grounds right up until the moment of his execution. Many of them claimed there was too much doubt about his guilt for the state to proceed. One of the original jurors, Brenda Forrest, declared on CNN: "If I knew then what I know now, Troy Davis would not be on death row. The verdict would be 'not guilty.'" Troy Davis's sister claims that the witnesses were coerced and threatened with jail time. Another witness, Benjamin Gordon, alleged that he had been coerced by police to implicate Davis. In addition, Gordon signed a statement in 2008 that claimed he actually had seen another person shoot the officer. Because of these and other testimonies, Davis's supporters contended there was too much doubt for Davis to be executed. The State of Georgia disagreed.

Source: Thomson 2011.



Troy Davis.

Voices

THE ECONOMICS OF MASS INCARCERATION

Mass incarceration is a consequence of laws passed at both the state and the federal levels. Before the election of Ronald Reagan as president, however, keeping street crime in check had traditionally been the responsibility of state and local law enforcement. To fulfill Reagan's campaign promise to fight crime, his administration poured money into federal law enforcement

agencies, and Congress passed federal laws that enhanced the punishments for drug-related offenses.

California led the states in prison buildup. Between 1977 and 2007, the California State Assembly passed more than 1,000 laws extending and toughening prison sentences (Wacquant 2009). The California state prison population increased five-fold between 1982 and 2000, even though the crime rate peaked in 1980 and declined thereafter (Gilmore 2007). Notably, California's incarceration rate increased *after* the crime rate had begun to decrease. California had built only twelve prisons between 1852 and 1964, yet built twenty-three major new prisons between 1984 and 2004 (Gilmore 2007). What happened? Why did California engage in this massive prison-building project? Why did the legislature pass so many anticrime laws?

The answers to these questions can be found through a consideration of the economic restructuring that California underwent leading up to this period. During World War II, much of California's prosperity had been tied directly to defense contracts: people from across the country flocked to California to secure well-paying jobs building defense machinery. After the war, California invested in education and technology to ensure that defense contracts would continue, and it endeavored to make itself uniquely able to provide research, development, and manufacturing for the Department of Defense (DoD). DoD contracts continued to come in until the 1980s, but they contributed to splitting the labor market into high-skilled, well-paid technology jobs on one hand and low-skilled, poorly paid jobs on the other (Gilmore 2007).

The restructuring of California's economy led to increases in unemployment, poverty, and inequality. By the 1980s, California was a highly unequal state, with high poverty rates, high housing costs, and high unemployment rates while also being home to some of the wealthiest people in the nation. Over the next fifteen years, its economy continued to change, with increasing numbers of low-paid manufacturing and service jobs and fewer high-paid manufacturing jobs. Childhood poverty rates had increased 25 percent between 1969 and 1979, and they continued to soar over the next decade, increasing another 67 percent between 1980 and 1995, so that by the end of the twentieth century, one in four children in California lived in poverty (Gilmore 2007). Beset with social problems, the California legislature attempted to use mass incarceration as a solution to poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Prisons serve the double purpose of providing employment to tens of thousands of Californians and locking away a good proportion of the surplus labor force.

The economic restructuring in California mirrored that of the rest of the country, as did cuts in government spending. When Ronald Reagan took office in 1980,

he implemented **Reaganomics**, a set of economic policies that involved heavy cuts to a wide variety of social programs across the country. Christian Parenti (1999, 40–41) explains: “In 1982 alone, Reagan cut the real value of welfare by 24 percent, slashed the budget for child nutrition by 34 percent, reduced funding for school milk programs by 78 percent, urban development action grants by 35 percent, and educational block grants by 38 percent.” These enormous cuts in social spending disproportionately affected low-wage people of color in urban areas.

At the same time that states were cutting spending on education and social services, all but two states (Massachusetts and New Hampshire) increased spending on incarceration. Nationwide, spending on state and local corrections outpaced spending on PK–12 education three-fold from 1979–1980 to 2012–2013 (Figure 11-8). Public school expenditures increased by 107 percent (from \$258 to \$534 billion), while total state and local corrections expenditures increased by 324 percent (from \$17 to \$71 billion). The magnitude of this increase varied considerably from state to state. In New Mexico and Wyoming, incarceration spending outpaced education spending eight-fold (Stullich, Morgan, and Schak 2016).

Neoliberalism is a label for the ideology that open markets, liberalized trade, and privatization are the keys to economic success. Neoliberalism is based on the idea that the government’s primary role is to protect property rights, free markets, and free trade, not to hand out social services to its citizens. Under this ideology, the government does not provide any social assistance, and the needs of the poor are left to the market. Although neoliberalism demands that the government cut back its social services, there is one area that tends to grow when these policies are implemented: its coercive arm (i.e., the police force and the military). Insofar as neoliberalism diminishes opportunities and services for the poor, the government must ensure that working-class and poor people do not pose a threat to the rich. Government cutbacks in social services often lead to dissent and increases in crime. The government responds by strengthening the police force and the military. Under neoliberalism, “in the United States, incarceration became a key state strategy to deal with problems arising among discarded workers and marginalized populations.

Reaganomics The economic policies of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, involving heavy cuts to a wide variety of social programs across the country.

neoliberalism The ideology that open markets, liberalized trade, and privatization are the keys to economic success.

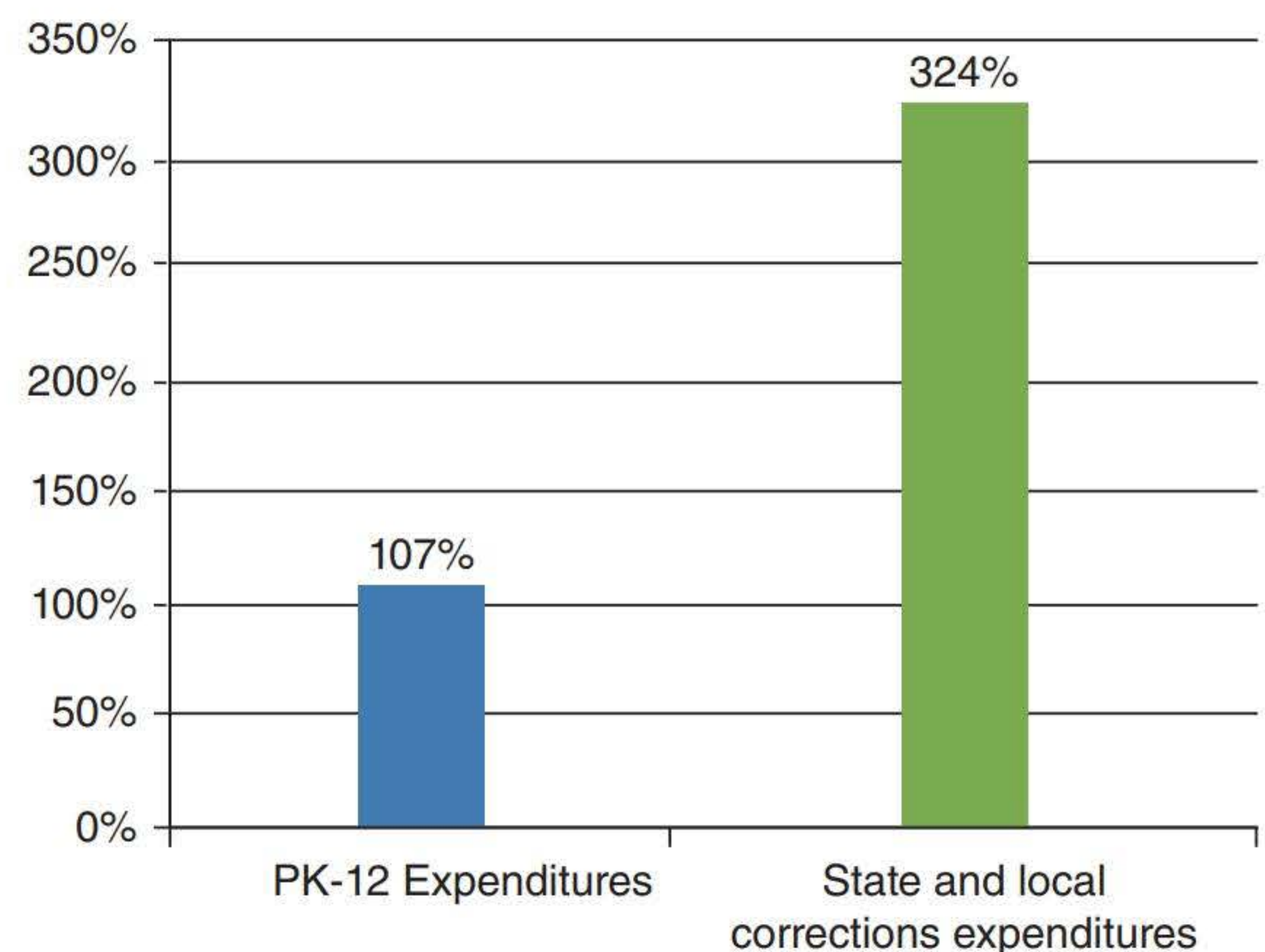


FIGURE 11-8.
Percentage change in education expenditures (PK–12) and state and local corrections expenditures from 1979–1980 to 2012–2013

Source: Stullich, Morgan, and Schak (2016).

outsourcing The practice of moving jobs once held by Americans overseas, where cheaper labor can be found.

deindustrialization The process of decline in industrial activity in a region or economy.

The coercive arm of the state is augmented to protect corporate interests and, if necessary, to repress dissent” (Harvey 2005, 77).

At the same time as the government began to cut social spending, companies began to **outsource** manufacturing, moving jobs once held by Americans overseas, where cheaper labor could be found. This practice, part of the larger process of **deindustrialization**, led to the impoverishment of cities such as Chicago and Detroit. Detroit was hit particularly hard: it lost half of its population in the 1980s. In Detroit as well as other cities across the country, the War on Drugs kicked off at the same time that inner-city communities were experiencing a dramatic economic crisis. As discussed in Chapter Ten, well-paying, stable blue-collar jobs disappeared, leaving unemployment, as well as social unrest, in their wake (Alexander 2010). This social unrest in turn led to the expansion of the criminal justice system, which was designed to manage and contain the underclass created by neoliberal economic policies.

When we tie economics into an analysis of the criminal justice system, however, it also becomes clear that the Great Recession (2007–2008) finally gave elected leaders the political will to make cuts to the prison system. In 2009, after thirty years of prison building, California found itself with a massive prison system it was no longer able to finance, and it began to release some prisoners to cut costs. Nationwide, the number of prisoners decreased for the first time in thirty-seven years (Aviram 2015). By 2011, one-fourth of states had closed or planned to close a prison (Clear and Frost 2014). In 2010, then-president Barack Obama signed the Fair Sentencing Act, which repealed the five-year mandatory sentence for first-time offenders and for repeat offenders with less than 28 grams of cocaine. The change also involved reducing the 100-to-1 sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine convictions to 18-to-1, in response to decades of activism (Murakawa 2014). And in 2016, Obama announced that the federal government would be ending its contracts with private prisons that held federal prisoners. When Donald Trump took office in 2017, however, he decided not to honor that agreement.

Private Prisons

Private prisons in the United States date back to 1984, when the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) was awarded its first government contract in 1984. During the 1990s, the CCA began to see substantial profits, and by 1998 its stock prices had hit \$44 a share. The CCA was doing so well that at the end of the twentieth century, the company began to build speculative prisons—“excess prison space for inmates who did not yet exist” (Wood 2007, 232)—with the expectation that the prison population would continue to grow.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, rates of incarceration leveled off, and the CCA faced serious problems. Its stock values fell from \$44 in 1998 to a mere \$0.18 in December 2000. By 2001, the CCA had 8,500 empty beds and was over a billion dollars in debt (Wood 2007). Its rival, Wackenhut, also saw its stock lose a third of its value between 1998 and 2001 (Berestein 2008). Both companies had reinvested their immense profits in new prisons that were now sitting empty, and funding options seemed bleak.

Because states had cut back funding for prisons, the CCA looked to the federal government. Its federal lobbying expenses increased from \$410,000 in 2000 to \$3 million in 2004, and these efforts appear to have paid off. Not only has the CCA been awarded lucrative federal contracts in recent years to build new prisons, but the government has increased its rate of immigrant detention, leaving no doubt that newly built prisons can be kept full (Golash-Boza 2012). There was a slight decline in CCA stock prices when Obama announced that the Department of Justice would not be using private prisons, but their stock rebounded a few months later when Donald Trump—who had campaigned on a promise of mass deportation campaign—was elected. The day after Trump’s victory was announced, shares of the two largest private prison companies—Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and GEO Group—increased 43 and 21 percent, respectively (Takai and Egan 2017).

The CCA has been able to obtain favorable government contracts in part because of its ties to current and former elected officials. The former head of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, J. Michael Quinlan, is one of the CCA’s top executives. Both the CCA and its competitor Wackenhut have dominated the private prison sector because of their political influence. As Phillip Wood notes, “both benefit from extensive and intimate connections with state and local politics and the public corrections sector as well as from the usual interlocking directorships with other corporations in prison services, construction, the media and finance” (2007, 231). The enormous public and private investment in the criminal justice system has led some scholars to argue that we now have a prison-industrial complex.

The Prison-Industrial Complex

The **prison-industrial complex** (PIC) refers to the vast network of prisons, jails, courts, police officers, and other elements that purport to reduce the amount of criminal activity in our society. The PIC is a “self-perpetuating machine”: the enormous investment in prisons, jails, and law enforcement, combined with the perceived political benefits of crime control, have led to policies such as mandatory minimum sentences that ensure that more people are sentenced to

prison-industrial complex (PIC) The vast network of prisons, jails, courts, police officers, and other elements that purport to reduce the amount of criminal activity in our society.

prison, thereby creating the need for more prison beds (Brewer and Heitzeg 2008, 637). A core feature of the idea of the PIC is that prisons are not built solely to house criminals; instead, a confluence of interests has led to building more prisons, enacting harsher laws, and mass incarcerating poor people. The constituencies with interests in mass incarceration include the media, private contractors, politicians, state bureaucracies, and private prisons (Davis 1998; Schlosser 1998; Do Valle, Huang, and Spira 2006; Gilmore 2007).

Ideas of racial otherness play an important role in the demonization of criminals. This otherization allows politicians to play on public fears and portray these groups as threatening public safety. As Michael Welch argues, the punitive drug control legislation passed in the last decades of the twentieth century to control crime and immigration is “not only poorly formulated, but also unjust and discriminatory against the poor and people of color” (2002, 14). Welch further contends that these laws are passed in the context of a “moral panic, a turbulent and exaggerated response to a putative social problem” (8).

The PIC relies on the production of criminals through repressive laws and the policing of communities to fill the prisons it builds (Richie 2005). The creation of increasingly strict crime laws is partly due to campaign tactics used by politicians who aim to play on fears regarding crime to capture more votes. One of the most famous examples of a politician using the fear of crime as a campaign tactic is the “Willie Horton” case. In the 1988 presidential race, George Bush’s campaign played on white Americans’ fear of crime and racial prejudices against blacks through use of an ad that featured “Willie Horton.” Horton, a young black man, escaped from prison while on a weekend pass. He then “kidnapped and brutally assaulted a white couple in their home, raping the woman and stabbing the man” (Mendelberg 1997). An ad that featured this story and a mugshot of Horton was used by the Bush campaign to portray the opposing party as being lax on crime. This ad was part of Bush’s successful campaign to keep the presidency in Republican hands. It is just one of many examples of politicians using fears about crime for political gain. Notably, the Willie Horton case used both the fear of crime and the fear of black men to push forward a political agenda.

The PIC has come into being because it serves the interests of powerful groups in our society. Politicians have used a tough-on-crime approach to gain votes. The mass media have highlighted local crime to attract viewers (Chermak 1994). Rural areas have turned to building prisons to boost local economic development—over two-thirds of the prisons built in California between 1982 and 1998 were built on formerly irrigated agricultural land that had ceased production (Gilmore 2007, 105–106). Finally, private prisons have cashed

in on growing rates of incarceration (Schlosser 1998; Do Valle et al. 2006; Brewer and Heitzeg 2008). For these reasons, not because of excessive rates of criminality, we now have over 2 million people behind bars in the United States, over ten times as many as we did prior to the 1970s. Mass incarceration of poor people has generated profits for private prisons and political capital for politicians, yet it has not made this country any safer (Hattery and Smith 2006).

BEYOND INCARCERATION: COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES

Incarceration affects most directly the 2 million people behind bars. It also has a great impact on the 7 million people under criminal justice supervision. Because of the lifelong stigma associated with a felony, mass incarceration also affects the 12 million felons in the United States long after they have been released from prison. Incarceration not only influences the lives of these 19 million people who have been directly involved in the criminal justice system: it also has wide-ranging collateral consequences for their children, spouses, and communities.

The Impact of Mass Incarceration on Families and Children

Over half of all inmates—more than 120,000 mothers and 1.1 million fathers behind bars—have minor children (Pew Charitable Trusts 2010). Often, when a family member is incarcerated, legally innocent people have to change their behavior, expectations, and living arrangements in response to the loss of a family member or friend. They also may suffer emotional or health-related consequences (Comfort 2007). Children are the most obvious victims of adult incarceration. More than 5 million American children, a staggering 7 percent (1 in 14), have had a parent incarcerated at some point in their lives (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2016).

Parental imprisonment deepens racial inequality insofar as black



▲ Over half of all inmates have minor children, who suffer the collateral consequences of mass incarceration.

and Latino families are disproportionately its victims (Wildeman 2009). Poor black and Latino children face trauma and disadvantage because of parental incarceration more often than do white children (Wildeman 2009). The incarceration of a parent—usually a father—often has financial consequences for a household. This is particularly the case when the father was working, as men often are the primary or only breadwinner in a family unit. Families with an incarcerated member often have to change residence because of the loss of an income. Relocating affects family members' access to neighborhood support networks, and children may be forced to change schools (Geller, Garfinkel, Cooper, and Mincy 2009).

Some mothers choose to maintain a relationship with the incarcerated fathers of their children. However, doing so requires resources and often puts a financial strain on families, especially if they are poor (Woldoff and Washington 2008). The loss of a parent has economic costs, but there may be other costs as well. When one parent is incarcerated, the other parent may have less time and money to invest in his or her children. In addition, older siblings may find themselves with new responsibilities, ranging from care of younger siblings to housework to the need to seek outside employment (Foster and Hagan 2009). The stigma associated with the incarceration of parents may also be a source of shame for children (Foster and Hagan 2009).

Although women are less likely to be incarcerated than men, female prisoners are more likely to have been primary caregivers for their children. Thus, the incarceration of women often means that children's lives are drastically altered, as they frequently find themselves in a new home, either with their father for the first time or with their grandparents. In the absence of any willing relative, many of these children end up in foster homes. When children are placed in foster care, parents face losing their children permanently. The 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) mandates the termination of parental rights once a child has spent more than fifteen months in foster care (Covington and Bloom 2003).

Children with incarcerated parents have been found to suffer mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and aggressiveness. Some even exhibit symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder. These problems are exacerbated when a parent is incarcerated because of child or spousal abuse (Comfort 2007). Foster and Hagan (2009, 191) have "found strong evidence that the imprisonment of fathers has negative causal consequences for children." They further contend that economic disadvantages are only one of many that children of the incarcerated face: children also suffer educational and emotional disadvantages when their parents are incarcerated.

The Lifelong Stigma of a Felony: “The New Jim Crow”

In the 2016 presidential election, over six million adults in the United States were prevented from voting because of laws restricting voting rights for those convicted of felony-level crimes (The Sentencing Project 2016). Voting restrictions are just one way that former inmates face legalized exclusion. When a person is released from prison, he or she must not only figure out how to start anew with few resources, but also deal with life as a felon. In the United States, it is illegal to discriminate against people because of race, color, or national origin. However, it is perfectly legal to discriminate against a person because of a felony record. Felons can be excluded from employment, housing, voting, public benefits, and jury service. In many major cities, three-quarters of African American men have criminal records and are subject to legalized discrimination (Alexander 2010). Legal scholar Michelle Alexander (2010, 38) argues, “Today a criminal freed from prison has scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a freed slave or a black person living ‘free’ in Mississippi at the height of Jim Crow.”

research focus

Can Felons Get Jobs?

Sociologist Devah Pager (2007) deployed a field experiment to find out how severe the stigma of a felony record is for people released from prison and whether the stigma varies racially. Pager sent two white applicants to apply for 150 jobs. She assigned them identical credentials, except that in some cases, the white applicant had a criminal record, and in other cases the white applicant did not have a criminal record. She found that the white person with the criminal record received a callback subsequent to a job application 17 percent of the time. In contrast, the white person without a criminal record received a callback 34 percent of the time. In other words, not having a criminal record doubled the chances of a callback for the white jobseeker.

Then, Pager sent out a pair of black jobseekers to apply for 200 jobs. In their case, the jobseeker with a criminal record received a callback in only 5 percent of cases, as compared with the non felon, who received a callback in 14 percent of cases. Notable here are that (1) a white felon had a better chance of getting a

(continued)

callback than a black nonfelon; (2) a white felon was one-half as likely as a white nonfelon to get a callback, whereas a black felon was only one-third as likely as a black nonfelon to get a callback; and (3) black felons got callbacks only 5 percent of the time, meaning that, on average, they would have to apply for twenty jobs just to get one callback, whereas white nonfelons would have to apply for only three.

Callback Percentages for Job Applicants in Pager's Study

	Black Men	White Men
Felons	5%	17%
Nonfelons	14%	34%

These findings led Pager to argue that because of stereotypes about black criminality, employers tend to think that a black person with a criminal record is a criminal, whereas they are more likely to see a white person with a criminal record as someone who made a mistake but is essentially a good person. Pager refers to incarceration or a felony on the record as a “negative credential” insofar as it makes it more difficult for felons to get jobs. Because of this negative credential, about 75 percent of people released from prison are unable to find work in the first year after their release.

Sociologist William Julius Wilson (2009) has argued that discrimination is no longer a determining factor for black Americans and that instead, inequality between blacks and whites can be explained largely by structural changes in the economy. Devah Pager's findings indicate that individual-level discrimination also plays a role in blacks' relatively high rates of unemployment. For African Americans, the mark of a felony on their record makes it very difficult for them to find employment. In addition, this mark does not go away with time.

For Discussion

1. Why do you think a white felon has a better chance of getting an entry-level job than a black nonfelon?
2. Pager argues that having a felony is a “negative credential.” Are there any other characteristics jobseekers might have that also could be negative credentials?
3. Do you think that Pager would have had different results if she had included women in the study? How so?

Source: Pager 2007.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Legal scholar Michelle Alexander (2010) has recently made the case that mass incarceration is the civil rights issue of the twenty-first century. She contends that because incarceration has become a common life event for African Americans, and because it is legal to discriminate against felons, our criminal justice system systematically denies rights and opportunities to African Americans, effectively replacing openly racist policies of the past. According to Alexander, “today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all the ways that it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans. Once you’re labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination—employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service—are suddenly legal” (2010, 2). As discussed previously, she even goes so far as to contend that “today a criminal freed from prison has scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a freed slave or a black person living ‘free’ in Mississippi at the height of Jim Crow” (138). What do you think? Is mass incarceration the “New Jim Crow”?

Mass incarceration has been condoned by American voters because crime control is considered a crucial element of a safe society. However, the evidence presented in this chapter makes it clear that mass incarceration is not an effective crime control strategy. Moreover, the consequences of zealous law enforcement have been felt more deeply in already-disadvantaged communities. What if, instead of creating a safer society, mass incarceration has been the root cause of poverty, violence, and instability in U.S. cities?

The incarceration rate appears to have leveled off in recent years, largely because the global economic crisis has required states to cut back expenditures—the highest of which are related to criminal justice. In short, states do not have the budgets to incarcerate more people. But the question of whether we will witness yet another turn in the history of criminal justice is an open one.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

1984 Crime Control Act	322	racial profiling	324	outsourcing	332
Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986	322	Reaganomics	331	deindustrialization	332
Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988	322	neoliberalism	331	prison-industrial complex (PIC)	333

11.1 What factors explain the rise of mass incarceration in the United States? (pp. 312–323)

- The United States has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world. Moreover, black and Latino men are disproportionately affected by harsh crime-control policies.

Review

- » What is the difference between crime rates and incarceration rates?
- » Explain the trends in property crime and violent crime rates between 1970 and 2000. Compare these trends to incarceration rates. What differences do you see?
- » How do incarceration rates in the United States compare to those of other developed countries?
- » Why does the author argue that the United States is in the midst of an era of mass incarceration?

Critical Thinking

- » What unique features of the United States might play a role in its high incarceration rates?
- » How has the War on Drugs affected mass incarceration?

11.2 How are disparities in the criminal justice system reflective of institutional racism? (pp. 323–329)

- The high rates of incarceration for black and Latino men can be traced to racial profiling and sentencing disparities. Racial ideologies of black male criminality have serious implications for the lives of African American men.

Review

- » How does racial profiling affect incarceration rates?
- » What roles do individual racism and institutionalized racism play in maintaining the high rates of incarceration for African Americans?
- » What are three reasons African American men are seven times more likely than white men to be incarcerated?

Critical Thinking

- » Why do you think police officers are more likely to conduct drug raids in low-income, black neighborhoods than in wealthier, primarily white neighborhoods?
- » What role might individual discrimination play in maintaining the high incarceration rates for African Americans?

11.3 How is the rise of mass incarceration tied to large-scale economic trends? (pp. 329–335)

- Mass incarceration came about at the same time that inner cities began to lose jobs. There are profit motivations behind private prisons, and certain groups have benefited economically from mass incarceration.

Review

- » How is economic restructuring related to incarceration and crime rates?
- » What is the prison-industrial complex?
- » How did the Great Recession affect incarceration rates?

Critical Thinking

- » Evaluate the evidence presented in this chapter for the connection between economic trends and mass incarceration.

11.4 What are the collateral consequences of mass incarceration? (pp. 335–338)

- Mass incarceration affects the 2 million people behind bars and the 7 million people under criminal justice supervision. It also affects millions of felons in the United States and their families and children.

Review

- » What are some of the ways that mass incarceration affects men and women differently?
- » What parallels does Michelle Alexander draw between the Jim Crow Era and the present era?
- » How are children affected when their parents are incarcerated?

Critical Thinking

- » Evaluate the human cost of incarceration: in what ways, beyond financially, does the United States pay for mass incarceration?

Talking about Race

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. In a discussion, consider why incarceration rates in the United States continued to increase in the 1990s even as crime rates fell. How are our distinctively high incarceration rates related to ideas about race? For a contemporary example, you may be able to compare responses to the current rise in heroin abuse versus the rise in crack abuse of the 1980s.



Telegraph Poles with Buildings. Joseph Stella. 1917. Oil on canvas, 36 1/4 x 30 1/4 in. (Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago/Art Resource, NY)

Health Inequalities, Environmental Racism, and Environmental Justice

As You Read

- 12.1** What is the racial history of health disparities in the United States?
- 12.2** How do health disparities in the United States today vary by race and ethnicity?
- 12.3** What are the effects of environmental racism?
- 12.4** What are some community movements for environmental justice?

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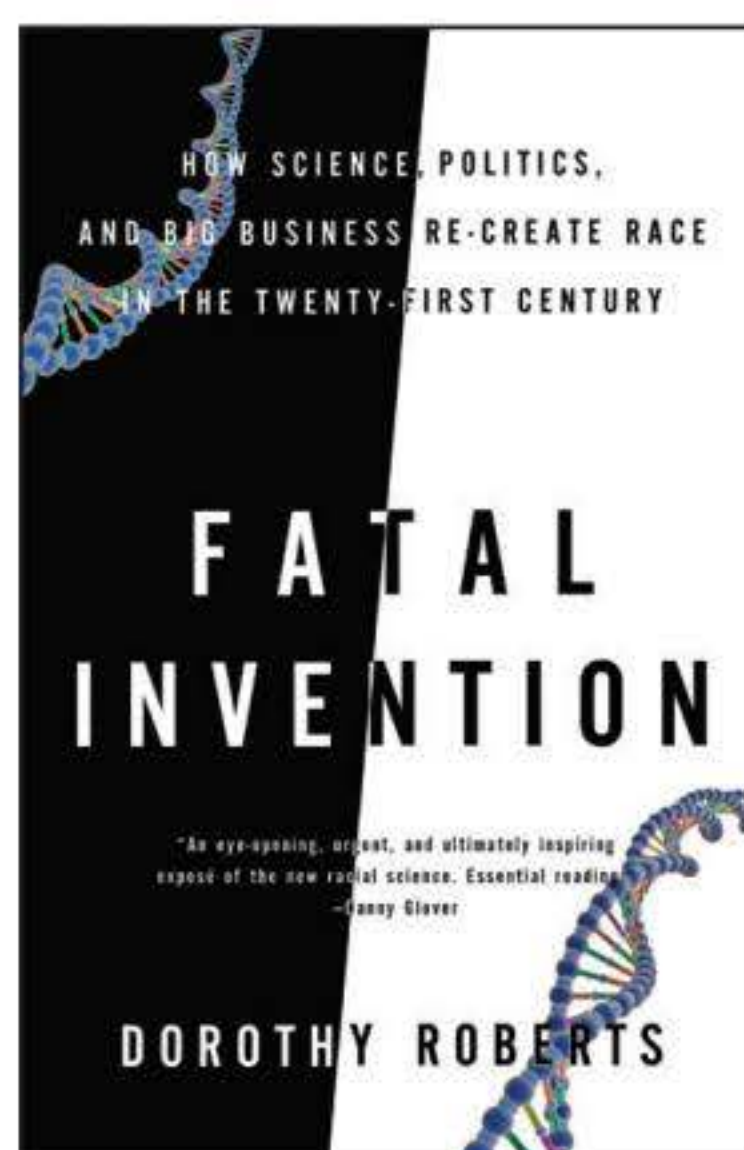
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Thus far, we have examined racial inequalities in education, in the labor market, in housing, and in the criminal justice system. The accumulated disadvantages for nonwhites, what Joe Feagin (2001) calls “systemic racism,” are also found in the areas of health and the environment. Racial inequalities in the United States diminish not only opportunities for nonwhites, but also the most valuable asset we have—our time on earth. A twenty-five-year-old African American can expect to live five years less than a twenty-five-year-old white American. Blacks and Latinos are much more likely than whites to live in neighborhoods with toxic waste facilities. How do we begin to make sense of the cost of racial inequality when we learn that racism literally kills? In *Fatal Invention*, Dorothy Roberts offers poignant reflections on racial disparities in health.

Imagine if every single day a jumbo jet loaded with 230 African American passengers took off into the sky, reached a cruising altitude, then crashed to the ground, killing all aboard. According to former surgeon general David Satcher, this is exactly the impact caused by racial health disparities in the United States. In a 2005 article, he and several other health experts reported that there had been 83,570 “excess” black deaths in 2002. That represents the number of African Americans who would still have been alive that year if their life expectancy were the same as that of whites. The number of excess deaths is closer to 100,000 today. In one generation, between 1940 and 1999, more than 4 million African Americans died prematurely relative to whites. Overall life expectancy is actually declining in some counties where there is a high proportion of African Americans.

In my hometown of Chicago, one third of all black deaths are excess in terms of the black–white mortality gap. In other words, one out of every three black people who died in 2000 would have survived if black and white death rates were equal. Chicago is a very segregated city, so longevity varies geographically. Of Chicago’s seventy-seven community areas, the twenty-two with the lowest life expectancies are more than 90 percent black. There is a difference of sixteen years between the white neighborhood with the highest life expectancy and the black neighborhood with the lowest. Blacks are more likely to die prematurely (before the age of sixty-five) from most major illnesses: cancer, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease,

AIDS, and coronary heart disease, to name a few. Race matters at the beginning of life as well. Black infants are almost three times more likely than white infants to die before their first birthday. Blacks also spend a greater portion of their lives in poor health. They experience a rate of preventable hospitalizations more than double that of whites. “That’s not a racial health *gap*: it’s a *chasm* wider and deeper than a mass grave,” says Harriet Washington, whose book *Medical Apartheid* chronicles medical experimentation on black Americans from colonial times to the present.

Similarly dreadful statistics are available for other U.S. minority groups, including Latinos and Native Americans. Recent immigrants from Latin America tend to be in better health than white Americans, despite having higher rates of poverty and less access to health care—a curiosity known as the “Hispanic Paradox.” But their health advantage disappears in the generation born in the United States. Latinos and blacks are about twice as likely as whites to have diabetes. In November 2009, President Barack Obama convened the largest gathering of Indian tribal leaders in U.S. history—bringing together representatives from more than five hundred tribes—to discuss their urgent health needs. “Native Americans die of illnesses like tuberculosis, alcoholism, diabetes, pneumonia and influenza at far higher rates,” Obama said.

Source: Roberts 2012, 81–82.

What explains these disparities in life expectancy? The answers we provide to such questions are perhaps as important as the lives at stake.

In this chapter, we will explore the complexities of racial inequalities in health and the environment. This discussion will shed light on why nonwhites have lower life expectancies than whites, as well as a host of other facts related to health disparities. We will continue to consider the effects of racial ideologies by asking, “How have unequal health outcomes been explained in the past, and how do these explanations relate to changing racial ideologies over time?”

THE HISTORY OF HEALTH DISPARITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Disparities in life expectancy for blacks and whites in the United States are not new. Medical treatment of African Americans during and since slavery has been at best subpar and at worst deadly. It is not difficult to imagine that the lives of people of African descent were devalued in the past, but a look

into the history of health disparities and medical care also gives us insight into present-day inequalities.

Involuntary Experimentation on African Americans

During slavery in the United States, medical care was brutal and ineffective for most people. Slaves in particular suffered in innumerable ways under the care of physicians, and they had no option to refuse treatment. The accounts that remain about the treatment of slaves by southern doctors provide a window into some of the brutality slaves endured. One account is that of John Brown, who escaped from slavery and lived to tell his story.

In 1847, a former slave who had been known as “Fed” escaped to England, where he took on the name John Brown. In his memoir, Brown describes how he was subjected to medical experimentation in Georgia in the 1820s and 1830s. Dr. Thomas Hamilton had cured Brown’s former master of an illness and, in exchange, asked to perform experiments on a slave. John Brown describes several sets of experiments Dr. Hamilton performed on him. The first was to subject him to extreme levels of heat in order to find a treatment for sunstroke. The next set involved letting him bleed every day. Then Dr. Hamilton burned Brown in an effort to see how deep his black skin went. Brown explained that Dr. Hamilton “also tried experiments upon me, which I cannot dwell upon” (quoted in Washington 2006, 54). We can only imagine what those experiments involved.

Dr. Hamilton’s tactics, unfortunately, were not an isolated case. The famed American doctor James Marion Sims (1813–1883) is sometimes called the father of American gynecology. A lesser-known fact about Dr. Sims is that he used involuntary subjects—many of them enslaved African Americans—for experiments. During the nineteenth century, vesicovaginal fistulas (abnormal passages connecting the bladder and the vagina that often developed as a result of childbirth) were a serious problem for women of all races. In developing a cure for the fistulas, Dr. Sims carried out a series of painful operations on enslaved women.

Sims convinced the owners of eleven female slaves with the condition to lend the slaves to him for treatment. It took Dr. Sims scores of experimental operations to arrive at his cure: silver sutures to prevent infection. One of the slaves, named Anarcha, was seventeen when she came under his care in 1844. She developed a fistula and a torn vagina after a forceps-induced birth to a still-born baby. Sims repeatedly sewed up Anarcha’s vagina, yet it became infected every time, and he had to painfully reopen the wounds. Sims knew about anesthesia but refused to administer it to Anarcha or to the ten other women. When

Sims began his experiments, he worked with several other doctors who helped him hold down the women as he performed the surgeries. Within a year, however, all the other doctors left, as they could not bear to hear the screams of the women. From then on, the enslaved women had to hold one another down as Sims operated without anesthesia. In 1849, Sims at last announced that he had found the cure and succeeded in repairing Anarcha's fistula. It remains unclear whether he repaired the fistulae of the other ten enslaved experimental subjects. This example is one of many situations in which treatments that would primarily benefit whites who could afford a doctor were first tried in an experimental fashion on slaves (Washington 2006).

The practice of using involuntary black experimental subjects continued after slavery and involved both live and dead bodies. In 1989, construction workers in Augusta, Georgia, uncovered nearly 10,000 human bones and skulls beneath what was once the Medical College of Georgia. This discovery led to an appalling finding: in the nineteenth century, doctors at the Medical College of Georgia had ordered porters at the college to remove bodies from nearby cemeteries for medical dissection. Most were removed from an African American burial ground. Overall, 75 percent of the bones belonged to African Americans, even though blacks made up less than half of the local population. When Harriet Washington (2006) researched the grave-robbing,



< Dr. James Marion Sims carried out horrific operations on enslaved women such as Anarcha without their consent.

she discovered that faculty at the Medical College had sent a slave called Grandison Harris to pull bodies from graves. Harris continued to work at the Medical College and to rob African American graves after emancipation until his death in 1911.

Involuntary experimentation continued well into the twentieth century, as evidenced by the infamous Tuskegee syphilis experiment (discussed in Chapter Three). One area of research in which blacks were disproportionately affected is the experimental use of radiation. In 1945, an African American truck driver named Ebb Cade was in a serious accident. When he arrived at the hospital in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, doctors determined that he would not survive his injuries. Unbeknown to Cade, the doctors were under contract with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and had been waiting for a moribund patient so that they could test the effects of plutonium, a radioactive element used in nuclear weapons and reactors. Without Cade's consent, they injected him with plutonium. The doctors' expectation was that Cade would soon die, but they hoped to keep him alive long enough to see the effects of the high dose of radiation on his body. In order to do so, they extracted bone chips and pulled fifteen of his teeth. Cade recovered, however, and escaped from the hospital six months later. He returned to his home in Greensboro, North Carolina, where he died in 1953 of heart disease, unrelated to his injection (Washington 2006).

Nuremberg Code Policy adopted by the U.S. Department of Defense in 1953 under which research subjects have to be informed that participation is voluntary and be provided with information about the nature, duration, and purpose of the research.

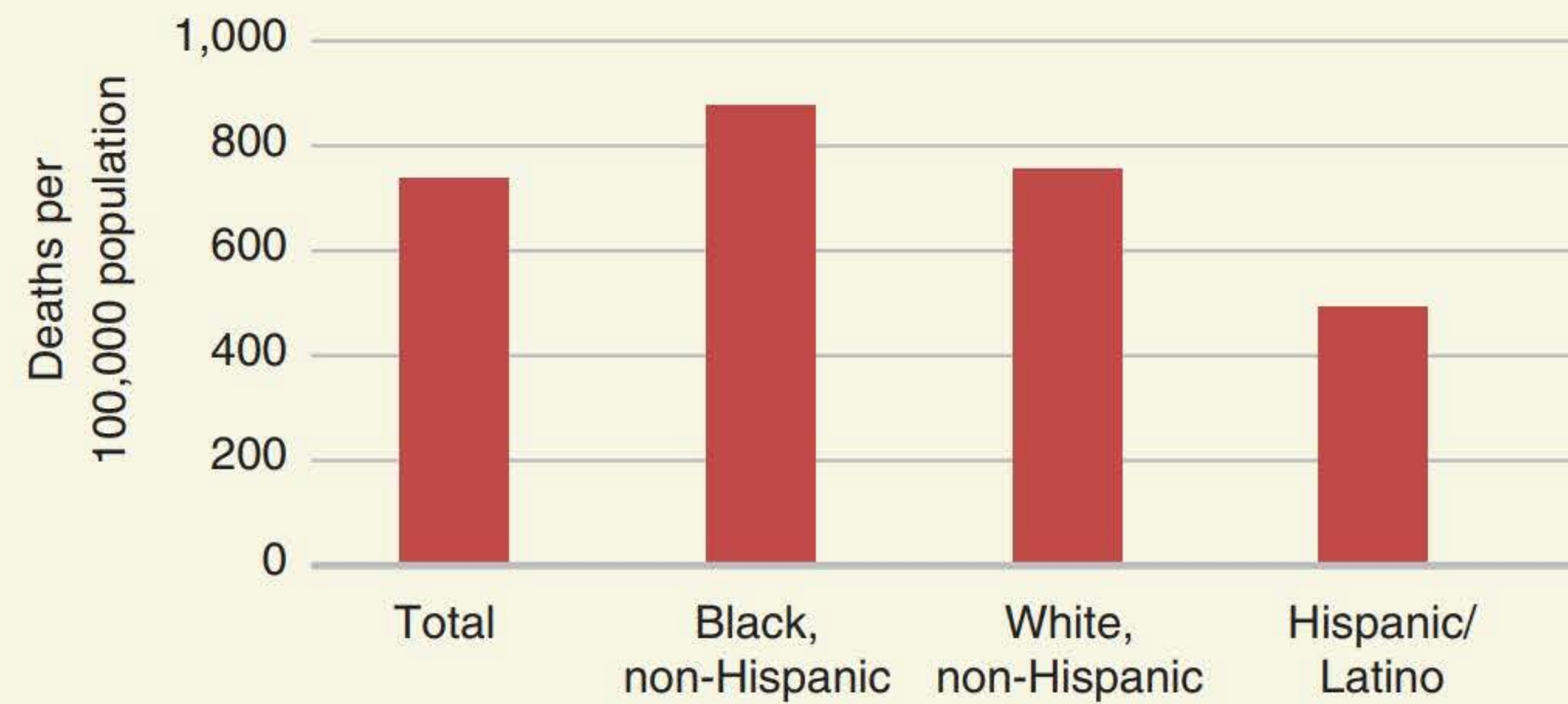
In 1953, the U.S. Department of Defense adopted the **Nuremberg Code**. Under this policy, any research subject has to be provided with information about the nature, duration, and purpose of the research before participating in it. Subjects also have to be informed that their participation in any research project is voluntary. Despite this order, approximately fifty more experimental radiation treatments on uninformed subjects occurred during the 1960s and 1970s (Washington 2006).

EXPLAINING HEALTH DISPARITIES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY TODAY

African Americans at every age have a much higher death rate than any other racial or ethnic group (At a Glance 12-1). Black men have a life expectancy of seven years less than white men (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2016), and the age-adjusted death rate is 15 percent higher for African Americans than it is for whites (MMWR 2017). Sociologists have offered a range of theories to explain these and other health disparities by race and ethnicity, as we will explore in this section.

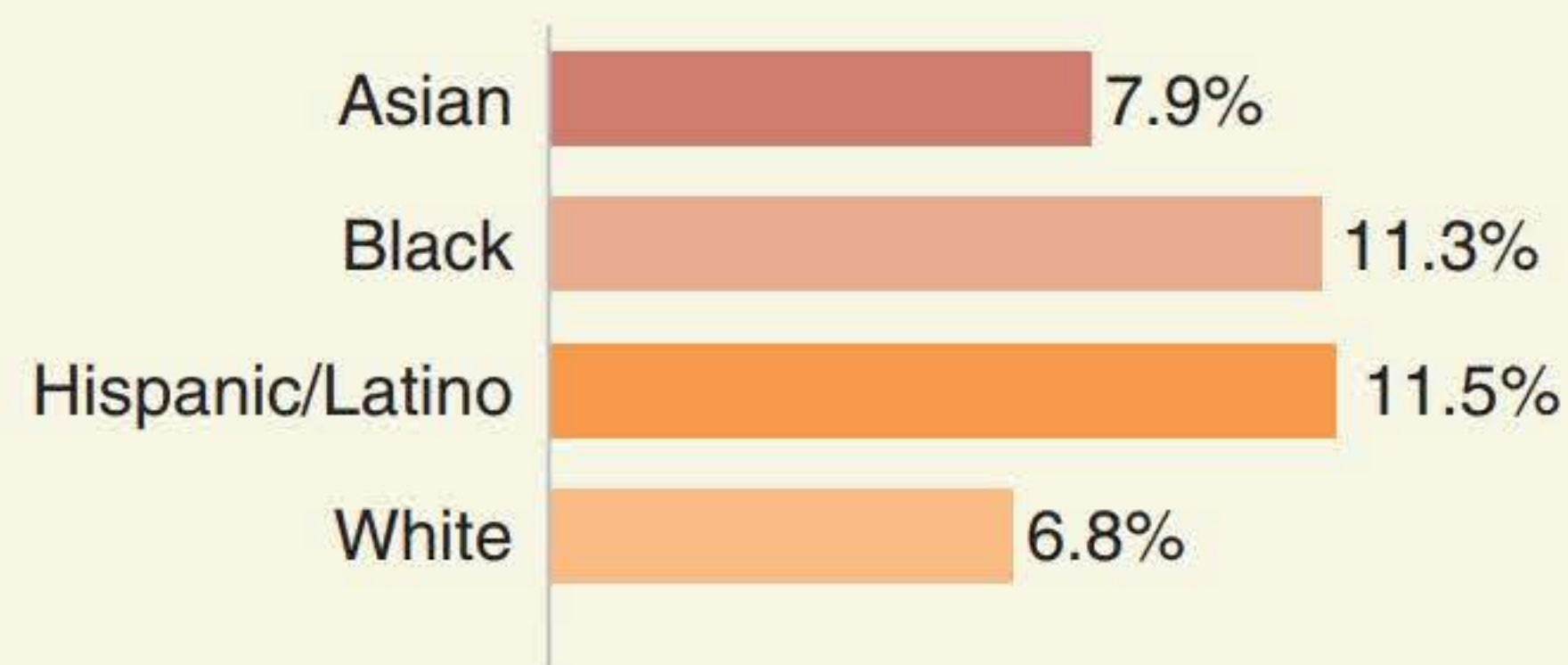
AT A GLANCE 12.1 Health Disparities and Inequalities by Race/Ethnicity

Age-Adjusted Death Rates, 2015

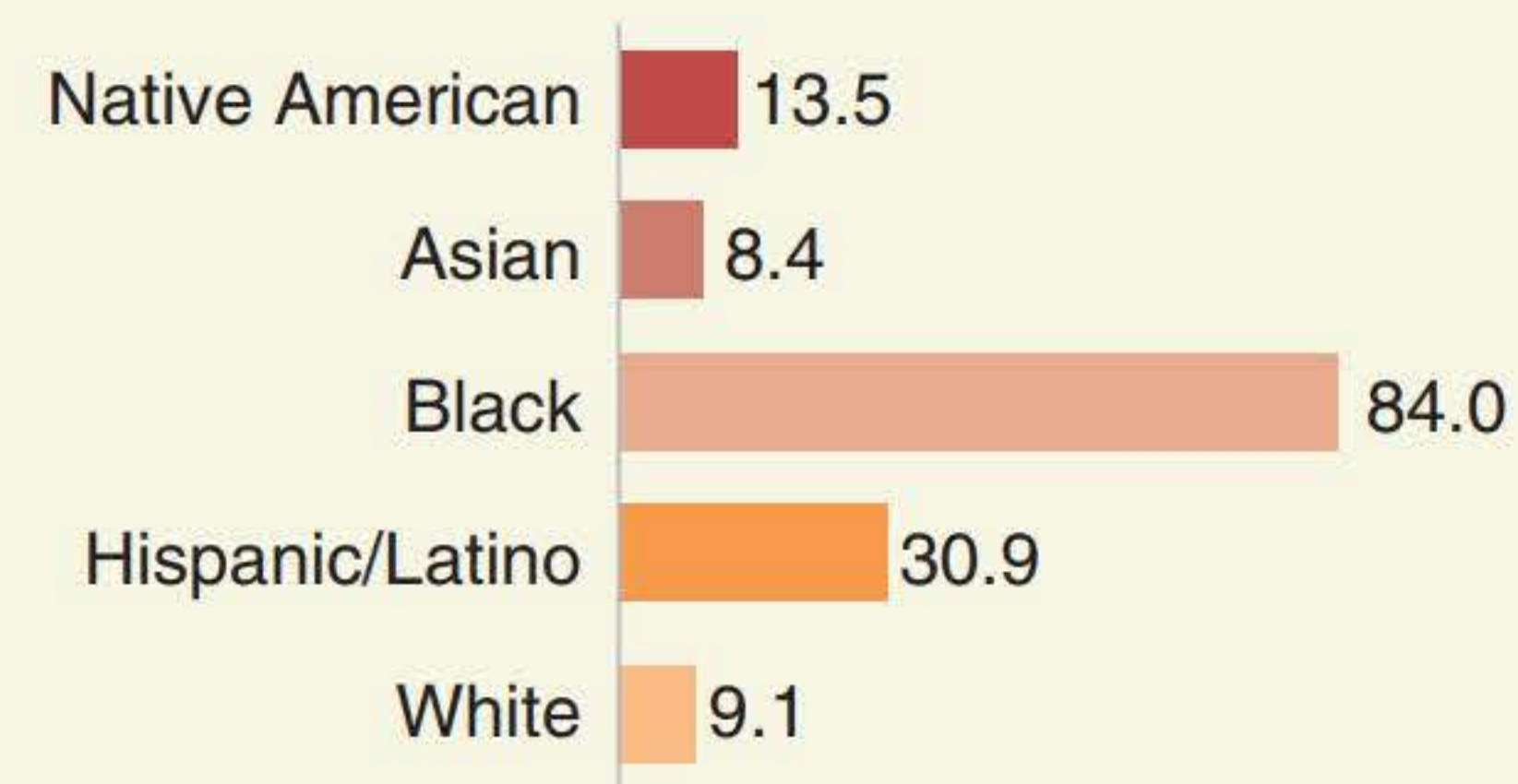


Data from MMWR 2017

Prevalence of diabetes

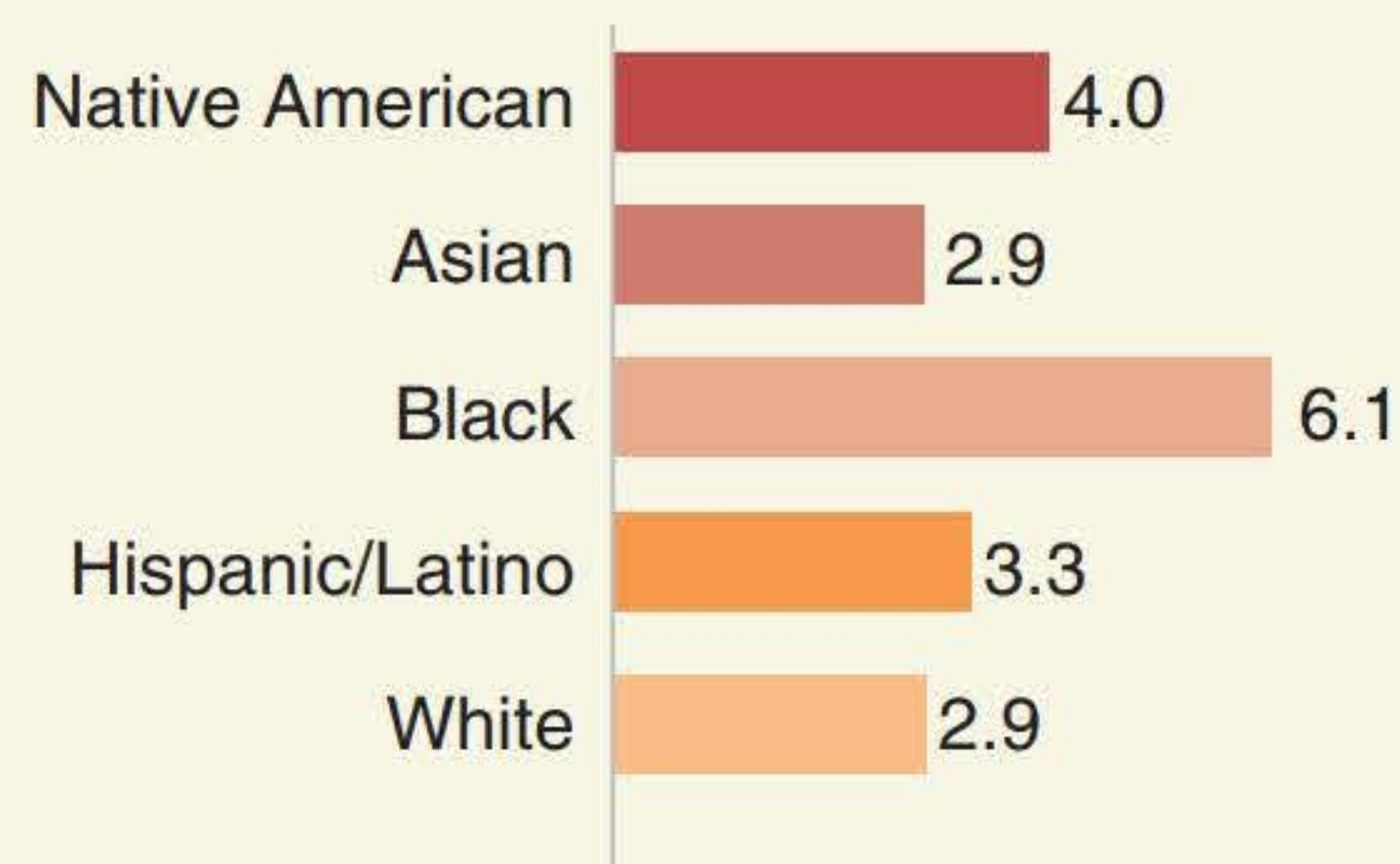


Rate of HIV infection diagnosis (per 100,000)

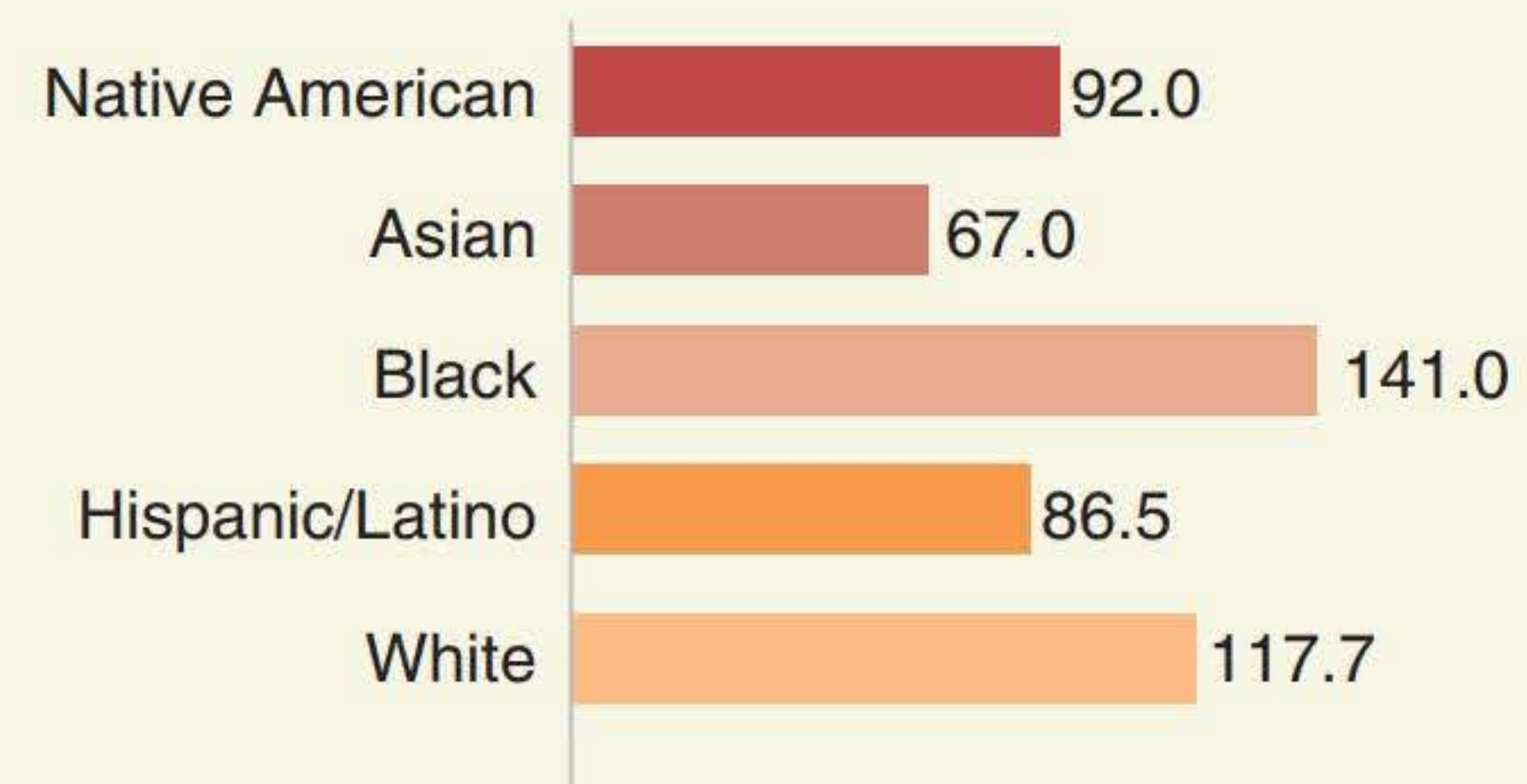


Early pre-term births* (rate per 100,000)

* < 34 weeks gestation

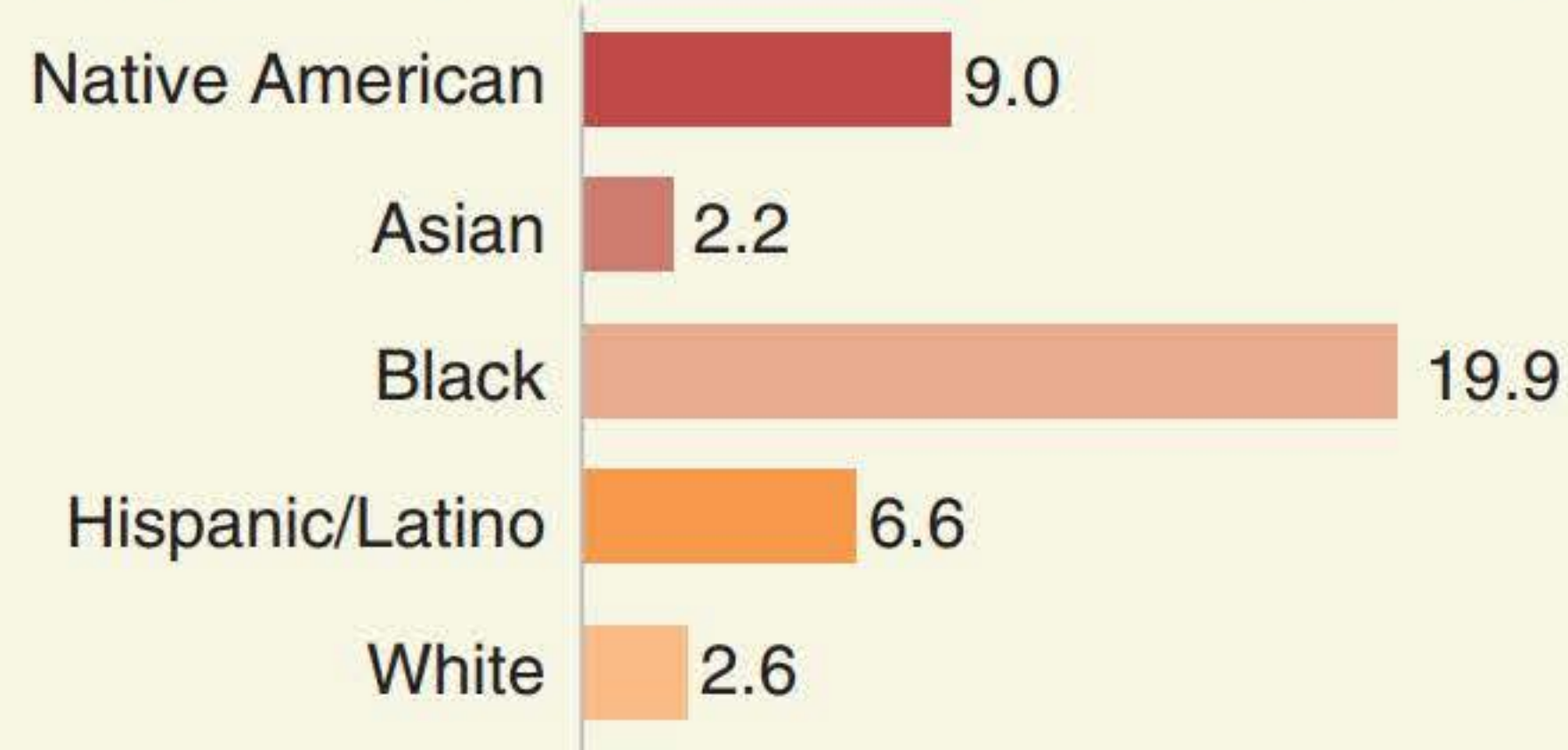


Age-adjusted death rates from coronary heart disease and strokes

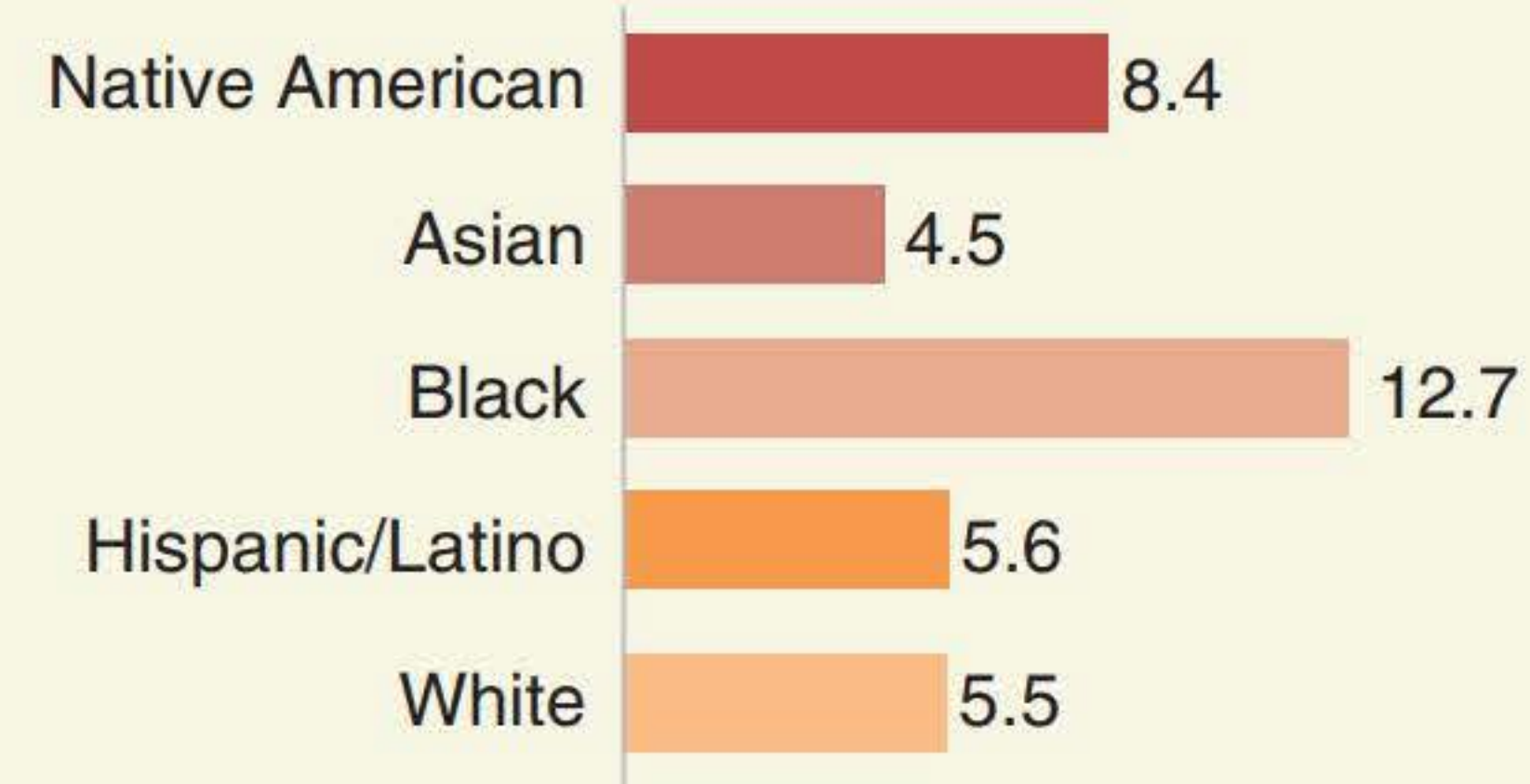


Death rate from homicide

Black Americans are killed at 12 times the rate of people in other developed countries (Silver 2015)



Infant mortality rate



Data from CDC Health Disparities and Inequalities

Socioeconomic Status and Health Disparities by Race/Ethnicity

First, we should note that health disparities are clearly linked to socioeconomic status. These disparities are evident in our earliest records and have been found in every country where they have been examined: people with higher incomes live longer, healthier lives. Moreover, it is not just poverty that affects health—relative poverty is also important. One way this relationship can be seen is through a comparison of life expectancies in Japan and Great Britain. In 1970, these two countries had similar life expectancies and similar levels of inequality. Over the next two decades, inequality increased dramatically in Great Britain while it narrowed in Japan. By 1990, Japan had the highest life expectancy in the world, while Great Britain's had declined (Williams and Collins 1995).

Every step up in income and wealth translates into an increased likelihood of having good health. However, once we begin to parse these outcomes by race, a different story emerges. African Americans do not experience the same health gains as whites do by virtue of an increase in socioeconomic status—though they do experience some health gains. There is clearly a relationship between health and socioeconomic status, but these factors work in different ways across racial and ethnic lines.

Black/white disparities do not disappear as African Americans gain more education and income. In 2008, for example, the birth rate for black women without a high school education was 60 percent higher than it was for white women with a similar background and level of education. In contrast, the infant mortality rate for black women with a college education was 78 percent higher than it was for white women with a college education. Whereas the disparities among white women, Asian women, Native American women, and Latina women narrowed with higher levels of education, the gap actually expanded for black women (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2011).

Studies of birthweight by race/ethnicity and level of education reveal a similar pattern. Babies born with low birthweight are at a higher risk for death, making birthweight an important factor for health scholars to consider. As shown in Figure 12-1, African American mothers with college degrees are more likely than whites, Hispanics, and Asians with less than a high school education to have low-birthweight babies (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2011).

One example of health outcomes that vary by race is that of Jasmine Zapata, an African American medical student at the University of Wisconsin. Jasmine, studying to be a doctor, knew the importance of proper prenatal care. She neither smoked nor drank during her pregnancy and carefully followed her

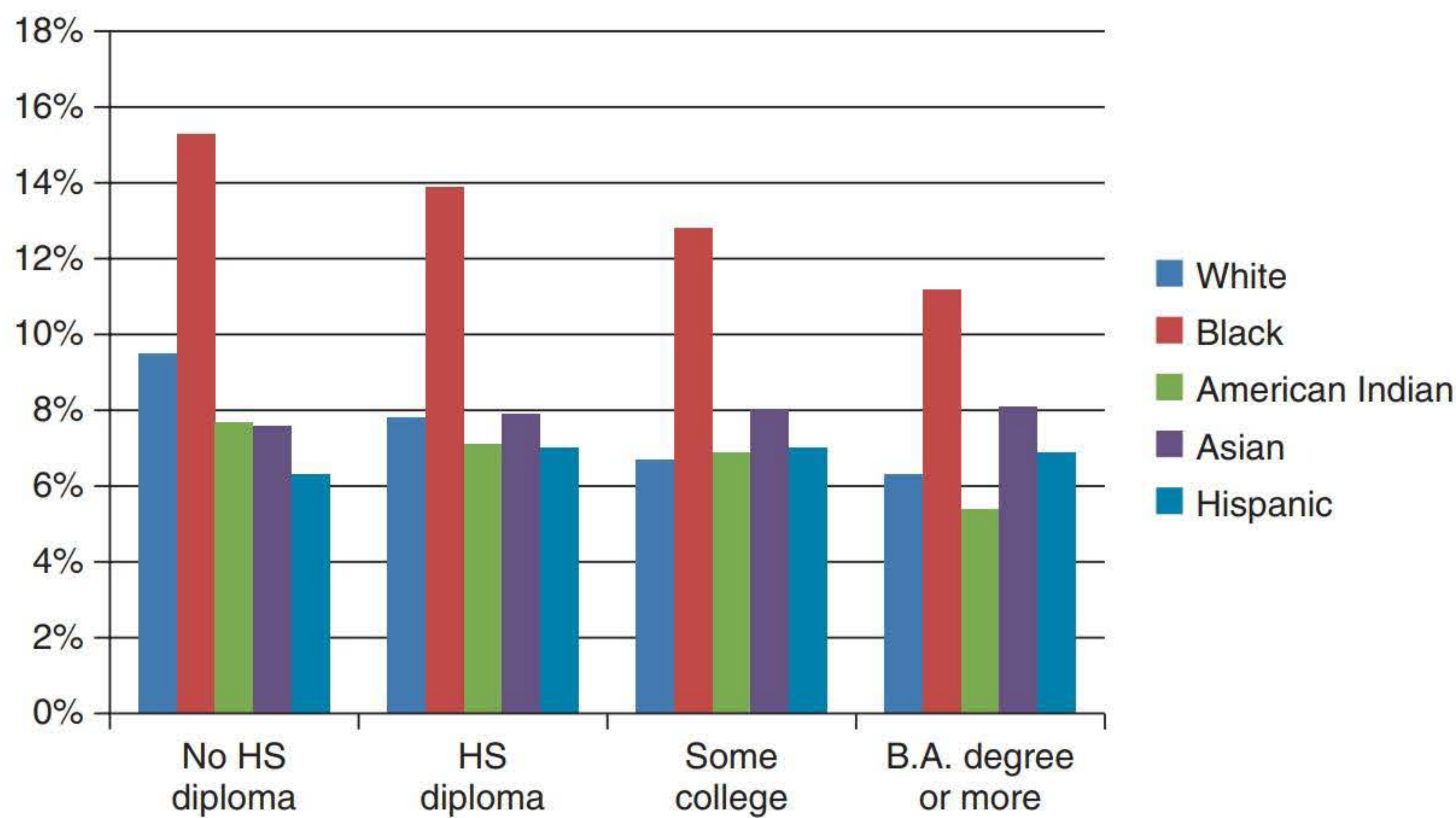


FIGURE 12-1.
Low Birth Weight Among Mothers 20 Years of Age or Older, by Race/Ethnicity and Education of Mother

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011).

doctor's advice. When she felt pain in her abdomen during her twenty-fifth week of pregnancy, Jasmine knew something was wrong. When she began to bleed profusely, she mentally prepared herself to lose the baby. Jasmine's daughter, Aameira, was born shortly afterward. Weighing just over a pound, her daughter miraculously survived. Jasmine was overjoyed but couldn't help but wonder why her daughter was born prematurely (Johnson and Ghose 2011).

Researchers continue to investigate why African American women have poorer birth outcomes than white women. Furthermore, why is it the case that health outcomes for African Americans do not improve with higher levels of income and education? If socioeconomic status alone does not explain these disparate outcomes by race and ethnicity, what does? Sociologists and public health scholars have offered several different explanations, which we will consider next.

Segregation and Health

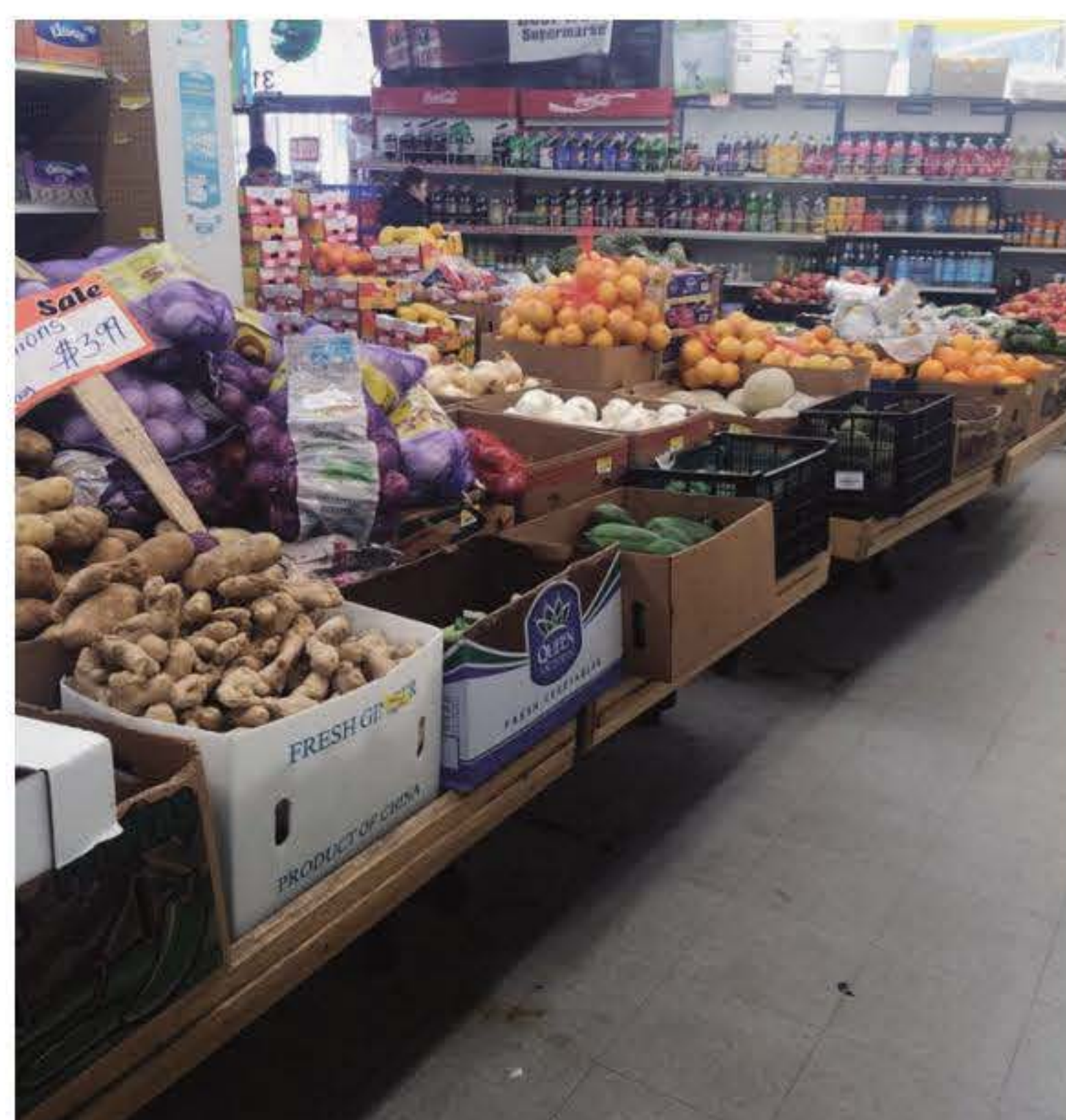
David Williams and Chiquita Collins (2001) argue that racial residential segregation is the primary cause of black/white health disparities because it affects the educational opportunities of children, concentrates poverty and resources, and forces many African Americans to live in environments that are unhealthy on a variety of levels. Williams and Collins suggest that segregation has adverse health outcomes for blacks because it creates “pathogenic residential conditions”—unsafe streets where people are scared to exercise, have few opportunities to buy fresh produce, see more advertisements for alcohol and tobacco, and live with higher rates of violent crime. One study in Baltimore,

for example, found that neighborhoods with a high percentage of African Americans are more likely to have liquor stores than are white communities (LaVeist and Wallace 2000). People living in disadvantaged neighborhoods also have higher incidences of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, tuberculosis, infant mortality, and hypertension.

Availability of healthy food is one way that segregation can affect health outcomes. A study in New York compared East Harlem, which is 6 percent white, with the Upper East Side, which is 84 percent white. East Harlem has the highest prevalence of diabetes and obesity in New York City, whereas the Upper East Side has the lowest. The researchers who carried out the study wanted to know if stores in these neighborhoods carried foods that doctors recommend for people with diabetes. They surveyed stores to find if they had diet soda, 1 percent or fat-free milk, high-fiber bread, fresh fruit, and fresh vegetables. They found that Upper East Side stores were three times as likely to carry all of the recommended food items as East Harlem stores (Horowitz, Colson, Hebert, and Lancaster 2004). The lack of access to healthy food in poor neighborhoods is a national problem (Ghosh-Dastidar 2014).

Persons of low socioeconomic status, blacks, and Latinos all have higher obesity rates than the general population. One possible explanation for this disparity is the resources available in the neighborhoods where they reside. Public health scholars have found that people who live close to supermarkets and have safe places to exercise are less likely to be obese. Low-income and nonwhite people are more likely to live far from supermarkets with healthy produce and closer to fast-food outlets and convenience stores. They are also more likely to live in areas where crime is higher, making it less safe to walk around the neighborhoods. By concentrating poverty and people of color, segregation can contribute to higher levels of obesity in these groups (Lovasi, Hutson, Guerra, and Neckerman 2009).

American Indians, African Americans, and Hispanics are about twice as likely as whites to be diagnosed with diabetes (Isaac 2012). These disparities are closely related to diet. What people eat is a result of their personal food preferences as well as what food is available where they live. The Tohono O'odham and Pima Indians of southern Arizona have the highest rate of type 2 diabetes in the world—nearly 50 percent of the people in their community have diabetes. A century ago, there were almost no cases of diabetes among these American Indian tribes. What happened? The film *Bad Sugar* explains that the Tohono O'odham diet changed



▲ Residents of low-income neighborhoods often have limited access to fresh, high-quality produce.

when the government cut off their irrigation water supply, preventing them from growing their own food. Instead of growing and eating the food they had eaten for centuries, they consumed food from the U.S. Commodity Supplemental Food Program (Adelman 2008). Prior to 1999, this program included no fresh produce. When the Tohono O'odham people began to consume large amounts of white flour, shortening, sugar, and canned foods, their diabetes rate skyrocketed. We see similar patterns, though not as drastic, in black and Latino neighborhoods, which have high concentrations of fast-food restaurants and corner stores selling many more packaged, processed foods than fresh produce. Diet is influenced by what food is available, and what we eat affects our health outcomes.

research focus

Health and Social Inequity in Alameda County, California

According to a report carried out by the Alameda County Public Health Department in California (2008), in Alameda County, poor whites are less likely than poor blacks to live in poor neighborhoods. Over half of poor whites live in neighborhoods with less than 10 percent poverty, compared with only 10 percent of poor blacks. The concentration of poverty for African Americans translates into a variety of negative health outcomes. Blacks in Alameda County are more likely to live in areas with high levels of diesel particles in the air, few good options for public transportation, limited options for healthy eating and exercise, and a larger presence of stores that sell liquor and cigarettes. These stressors in turn translate into poor health outcomes. Black children are 2.5 times more likely to have asthma, blacks and Latinos are more likely to be hurt in pedestrian or cycling accidents, and blacks have higher infant mortality and overall mortality rates than whites.

The disparities are at their most striking when comparing a white child born in the relatively well-off Oakland Hills with a black child born in low-income West Oakland. Compared with the white child, the black child is:

- 1.5 times more likely to be born premature or at a low birthweight
- Seven times more likely to be born into poverty

(continued)

- Two times more likely to live in a home that is rented
- Four times more likely to have parents with only a high school education or less.

These disparities continue over the life course:

- By fourth grade, the black child is four times less likely to read at grade level.
- By adolescence, the black child is 5.6 times more likely to drop out of school.
- By adulthood, the black child is five times more likely to be hospitalized for diabetes, twice as likely to be hospitalized for and to die of heart disease, three times more likely to die of stroke, and twice as likely to die of cancer.

The black child born in West Oakland can expect to die almost fifteen years earlier than the white child born in the Oakland Hills.

For Discussion

1. Do you think these disparities are unique to Alameda? Why or why not?
2. Is the community you are from more similar to Oakland Hills or West Oakland? How so?
3. How are racial disparities in health distinct from other forms of racial disparities?

Source: Alameda County Public Health Department 2008.

The Effects of Individual Racism on Health

To explain why African Americans have the worst health outcomes on nearly every measure, some scholars point to perceived discrimination. They argue that African Americans are disproportionately exposed to racial discrimination, that discrimination can produce stress, and that stress can lead to negative health outcomes. When African Americans experience discrimination, their responses may include anger, resentment, fear, frustration, and other stress responses. Scientists have found that these responses cause the adrenal gland to produce hormones that inhibit immune responses and increase vulnerability to disease (Clark, Anderson, Clark, and Williams 1999).

Although African Americans have higher levels of most physical ailments, it turns out they have lower levels of mental illness. Public health scholar James Jackson and his colleagues (Jackson, Knight, and Rafferty 2010) offer an explanation for this finding. They contend that African Americans have developed coping strategies that enable them to deal with stress (such as that related

to individual racism), but that these same coping strategies ultimately have negative physical health outcomes. For example, many African Americans are confronted with stressful conditions such as poverty, crime, poor housing, and racial discrimination. In response, many engage in unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, alcohol use, and overeating of fatty foods to alleviate stress. Jackson and his colleagues found that African Americans are likely to eat comfort foods to deal with stress because fatty foods inhibit the release of certain hormones and do provide short-term stress relief. However, the consumption of these foods leads to long-term health problems, obesity, stroke, and cardiovascular disease. They argue that the consumption of comfort foods does help reduce stress in the short term, thus leading to lower levels of mental illness, but has long-term physical effects.

One effect of eating to cope with stress is obesity. About half of all African American women are obese; the rate for white women, by contrast, is 30 percent. Christie Malpede and her colleagues (2007) explored the extent to which weight-related beliefs and attitudes are linked to obesity among black and white women. When the researchers asked black women how being black affected their weight, the most common responses included the consumption of unhealthy foods and lack of exercise. In contrast, white women responded that being a white woman meant that they had distorted expectations of body type, that they thought their success depended on being thin and beautiful, and that they had negative body images. Overall, black women talked more about food choices, and white women talked more about body image when asked about their weight-related beliefs.

The majority of the research on racism and health focuses on African Americans (Williams and Mohammed 2013). However, a few recent studies have shown similar patterns for other people of color. For example, Paradies et al. (2015) found a stronger association between poor mental health and racism for Asian Americans and Latinos than for African Americans, whereas the association between racism and poor physical health is strongest for African Americans. In another study, Diane Lauderdale (2006) found that Arab women who gave birth in the six months following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, had a higher risk of poor birth outcomes than those who gave birth before 9/11. She attributes this higher risk to heightened discrimination against Arabs in the aftermath of 9/11. A study of emergency room care providers found implicit biases against Native American adults and children, which are likely to affect their care in these settings (Puumala et al. 2016). Ongoing research in the area of racism and health will help us better understand these nuances, yet the current research demonstrates that racial

discrimination continues to be prevalent in our society and leads to negative health outcomes for people of color.

Life-Course Perspectives

Health inequality increases with age across a range of outcomes. For example, older African Americans have significantly higher levels of daily function limitations and disability than do older whites. Because of this type of health disparity, scholars have offered **life-course perspectives**, which focus on how health outcomes change over the life course. Two of the most accepted life-course explanations are the **cumulative disadvantage perspective** and the **weathering hypothesis**. The first explanation focuses on how disadvantages accumulate over the life course, and the second focuses on how constant exposure to stress accelerates health declines for blacks (Thorpe and Kelley-Moore 2012).

The cumulative disadvantage perspective provides a framework to explain the increasing divergence between black and white health outcomes. It focuses on the fact that many health conditions are related to stressors that accumulate over the life course. These stressors include poor nutrition, discrimination, and living in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Thorpe and Kelley-Moore 2012).

Scholars who adopt the weathering perspective contend that the health status of blacks declines more quickly than that of whites as a consequence of long-term exposure to unhealthy conditions. According to this perspective, black Americans age more quickly than whites because of the social, economic, and environmental conditions they face. The focus in this perspective is on the effects of sustained stressors—constant discrimination, financial stress, family crises, and fear—which can wear down the body in tangible ways (Thorpe and Kelley-Moore 2012).

Jan Warren-Findlow (2006) interviewed black women with early-stage heart disease to better understand how the weathering perspective could be applied to their lives. She found that two-thirds of the women she interviewed were taking antidepressants or anti-anxiety medication as a response to high levels of stress. All of the women talked about being stressed for reasons such as family problems, neighborhood violence, and financial strain. One woman explained that the stress of living “one paycheck away from homelessness” was “killing” her. Warren-Findlow argues that high levels of stress over the life course of these African American women contributed to their development of heart disease and the worsening of their condition.

A recent study found that although blacks and Mexican Americans have worse health outcomes than whites overall, Mexican Americans do not experience cumulative disadvantage or weathering in the same way that African

life-course perspective A framework used to explain how health outcomes change over the life course.

cumulative disadvantage perspective A framework used to explain the increasing divergence between black and white health outcomes that focuses on how disadvantages accumulate over the life course.

weathering hypothesis A framework used to explain the increasing divergence between black and white health outcomes that focuses on how constant exposure to stress accelerates health decline for blacks.

Americans do. Instead, Mexican Americans' higher likelihood of having serious medical conditions does not increase with age (Brown, O'Rand, and Adkins 2012).

Culture and Health

Is simply being or becoming an American bad for your health? The United States ranks fairly low for a country in the developed world on a wide range of health indicators. Moreover, immigrants often have better health than their native-born counterparts. In the United States, foreign-born women have substantially better pregnancy outcomes than women born in the United States. Gopal Singh and Stella Yu (1996) found that foreign-born women have lower infant mortality rates, lower rates of low birthweight, and lower rates of teenage births than their counterparts born in the United States. However, their study found some important variations. The reduced risk for infant mortality is most pronounced among Cuban immigrants—compared with Cubans born in the United States, they have 39 percent lower risk. Black immigrants also are 25 percent less likely to experience infant mortality than native-born blacks. Overall, foreign-born blacks, Cubans, Mexicans, and Chinese have lower risks for infant mortality and low birthweight than their native-born counterparts.

Health outcomes for Latinos compare favorably with those of other groups on a wide variety of measures. Recall At a Glance 12-1. In 2013, the age-adjusted death rate for Latinos was lower than that of all groups except Asians, and Latina women had the lowest rates of low-birthweight babies (Center for Disease Control 2016). And even though Latinos have, on average, a lower socioeconomic status than whites, they have comparable infant mortality rates (Lara, Gamboa, Kahramanian, Morales, and Bautista 2005). Scholars have come up with many explanations for this phenomenon, which is known as the **Hispanic Paradox**.

One hypothesis to explain the Hispanic Paradox is that many Hispanics are immigrants and have better health behaviors than native-born Americans. There is some support for this explanation, but the results are mixed. Mari-aelena Lara and her colleagues (2005), for example, found that Latinos who are more acculturated into U.S. society are more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors such as eating unhealthy foods, smoking, and drinking alcohol. In contrast, there were positive factors associated with **acculturation**, or the process by which immigrants adopt the behaviors and preferences of the host society: more acculturated Latinos were more likely to go to the doctor, get preventative care, be screened for cancer, and have health insurance. Overall, the researchers found that acculturation has negative effects in terms of health behaviors, but positive effects in terms of health care usage and access.

Hispanic Paradox The observation that even though Latinos have, on average, a lower socioeconomic status than whites, they have comparable health outcomes to whites.

acculturation A process by which immigrants adopt the behaviors and preferences of the host society.

Health and Structural Violence in Guatemala

Many clear links exist between stress and health outcomes. Cecilia Menjivar's (2011) work on structural violence in Guatemala helps us better understand its effects on women's bodies. Menjivar's work with women in eastern Guatemala points to the physical expressions of violence that we can see in women's lives: headaches, nervous breakdowns, and constant stomach pain. Nearly all the women that Menjivar interviewed for her book spoke of some form of mental or physical ailment.

Many of the women ignored their own health issues because of societal pressures to put their husbands and children first. One woman, Gracia Maria, told Menjivar that she never complained about her own ailments because her children's and husband's health were all that mattered. Thus, even though Gracia Maria had an extremely difficult pregnancy with her fifth child and could not sit up for two months after birth, she acquiesced to her husband's desire and had another child. Other women explained that they stopped treatment for their own ailments if one

of their children got sick and they needed the money to pay for their children's medicine.

Menjivar argues that the serious health issues the women she interviewed encountered were due to structural violence: poverty, isolation, interpersonal violence, patriarchy, and lack of access to health care. The extreme stress created by this structural violence has physical manifestations. One poignant example comes from a woman named Azucena. When her second daughter was born, Azucena's husband was out of town, and she had run out of food. Her neighbors gave her some tortillas, bread, and sugar, but she and her children were still hungry. She explained that the tension made her feel awful, "like cancer." Like many women, the extreme stress of poverty—combined with her husband ignoring her needs—created physical stresses on her body.

Menjivar's concept of "structural violence" is also a useful way to consider the relationship among health outcomes, race, gender, and poverty in the United States.

Source: Menjivar 2011.

Research by Edna Viruell-Fuentes (2007), however, challenges these findings on acculturation. Viruell-Fuentes acknowledges that Mexican immigrants often have better health outcomes than Mexican Americans; yet, she argues this is because Mexican Americans are more attuned to racial discrimination in the United States and that this discrimination leads to stress, which has negative effects on their health. Viruell-Fuentes's interviews with Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans shed light on the differences between these two groups. Mexican immigrants are likely to live in ethnic enclaves, where they have few interactions with non-Mexicans and thus are less likely to experience discrimination. In contrast, Mexican Americans experience persistent discrimination, exclusion, and "othering" beginning in elementary school. Mexican Americans recounted to Viruell-Fuentes that they grew up feeling angry about being excluded by white Americans. This exclusion was

alienating and psychologically straining. Viruell-Fuentes argues that these stressors—not acculturation—can explain why Mexican Americans have worse health outcomes than Mexican immigrants.

Most of the research on acculturation and health has focused on Latinos. However, there may be similar patterns for other groups. A recent study (Al Dahir et al. 2013) investigated the relationship between acculturation and diabetes risk among Arab Americans in southeastern Louisiana—a group that has higher than average rates of diabetes and other chronic diseases. The findings were mixed: men who were less acculturated to U.S. society had lower risk for diabetes, whereas women who were less acculturated had a higher risk. Across groups, immigrants tend to have worse health outcomes the longer they stay in the United States. Research continues on why this is—and how to change it (Oza-Frank, Stephenson, and Narayan 2011).

Genetics, Race, and Health

Although most social scientists accept that there is no biological basis for dividing humans into distinct racial groups, it can be hard to fully divorce ourselves from the idea that there are races and that they are distinct. Some medical researchers continue to hunt for genetic explanations for racial disparities in disease rates. One example is the Genetics of Asthma Lab, which studies the interplay between genes and the environment to determine the causes of asthma. It is certainly true that black and Latino children are more likely to suffer from asthma than white children. Most scholars, however, would attribute that disparity to the fact that black and Latino children are more likely to live in highly polluted areas. A 2007 report entitled *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty—1987–2007: Grassroots Struggles to Dismantle Environmental Racism in the United States* (Bullard 2007) used 2000 census data and databases of hazardous waste facilities to find out if there were racial disparities in the location of toxic waste facilities. The authors discovered that “people of color make up the majority of those living in neighborhoods within two miles of hazardous waste facilities, and toxic neighborhoods have twice the percentage of minorities as nontoxic neighborhoods.” Despite substantial evidence linking asthma and unhealthy air, some scientists insist on searching for genetic explanations for these and other disparities. What could their motive be?

A primary motive for seeking genetic explanations is profit potential. If diseases have genetic causes, corporations can design personalized medicine to cure them. In contrast, no profit is to be found in addressing deep structural inequalities that contribute to health disparities. In *Fatal Invention*, Dorothy Roberts (2012) explains how race is increasingly being used as a proxy for

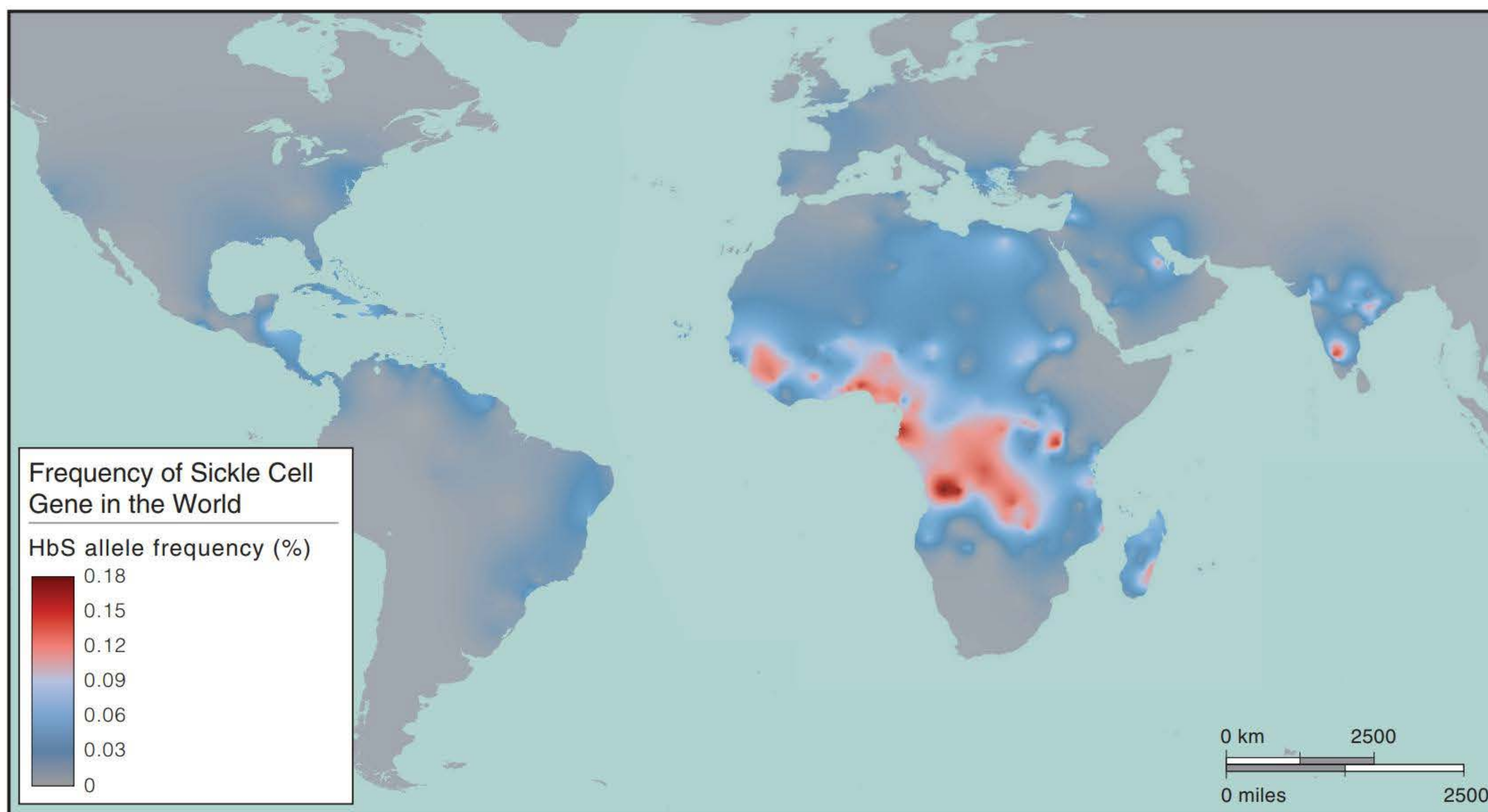
genetics to explain health disparities. Rather than blame structural inequality for poor health outcomes among people of color, researchers point to race and genetics.

Myths that “black” diseases exist may also motivate some researchers to seek genetic explanations for racial disparities in health. Many people, for example, believe that sickle cell disease is a black disease, but this is not true. Sickle cell disease is common wherever malaria is common. Thus, you can find sickle cell disease in parts of Africa as well as in parts of Europe, Oceania, India, and the Middle East—all regions where malaria is common (Figure 12-2). In contrast, large swaths of Africa are unaffected by both malaria and sickle cell disease. If doctors were to look for sickle cell disease only in black patients, they would risk the lives of many other patients who also are vulnerable to the disease. Sickle cell disease is more common among African Americans than other groups in the United States because the ancestors of many African Americans were from parts of Africa where malaria is common. African Americans whose ancestors came from other parts of Africa, however, are at much lower risk of sickle cell disease than people from Saudi Arabia, where malaria is also common.

In terms of health outcomes, race is often used as a stand-in for a more precise genetic explanation. For example, if researchers find that a certain glaucoma drug works better for blacks, the most likely explanation is that the drug

FIGURE 12-2.
**Frequency of Sickle Cell
Gene in the World**

Source: Malaria Atlas Project (2013).



actually works better for people with dark eyes and thus could be harmful for blacks with light eyes. Or a drug found to require a low dose for Asians could be related to weight, not to Asian ancestry. When scientists find that drugs work better for some races than for others, or in different doses depending on race, these racial explanations are most likely explained by another factor. Racial dosing and racial prescribing are imprecise and potentially harmful because race is always a stand-in for a better explanation (Roberts 2012).

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

As discussed earlier, African Americans and Latinos are more likely to live in neighborhoods where they have less access to fresh produce, parks, jogging trails, and healthy foods. In addition, people of color and poor people are also more likely to live close to places that can directly damage their health—toxic waste dumps, highly polluted freeways, and other environmental hazards. In this way, health disparities can be linked directly to **environmental racism**: institutional policies and practices that differentially affect the health outcomes or living conditions of people and communities based on race or color. The disparities between the living conditions of white and nonwhite communities are clear.

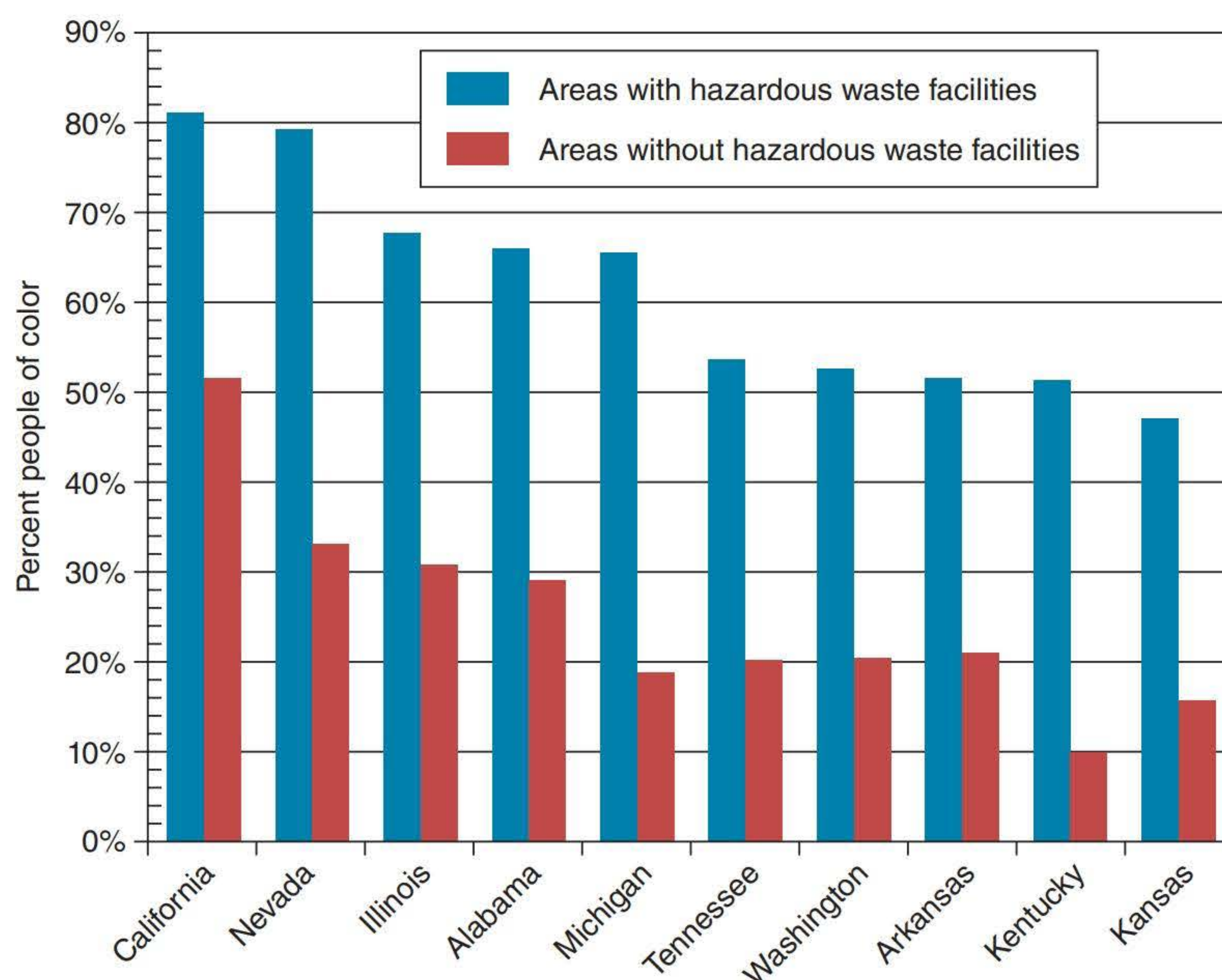
In the United States, poor people and people of color are more likely to be exposed to environmental hazards. Black children are five times more likely than white children to have lead poisoning. More than 68 percent of African Americans live within thirty miles of a coal-fired power plant, compared with 56 percent of white Americans. In 2000, neighborhoods with hazardous waste facilities were, on average, 56 percent nonwhite, and neighborhoods without such facilities were 30 percent nonwhite. In the southeastern region of the United States—the area once dominated by slaves and slaveowners—three out of four of the largest hazardous waste landfills can be found in majority-black areas (Checker 2006). Commercial hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities sited between 1966 and 1955 were placed in locations that were disproportionately poor and nonwhite at the time of siting; not surprisingly, those neighborhoods have become poorer and more nonwhite over time (Mohai and Saha 2015). As shown in Figure 12-3, neighborhoods with hazardous waste facilities—called host areas—have, on average, higher percentages of people of color than nonhost areas.

The placement of hazardous waste facilities affects community health. The lack of basic plumbing also has serious consequences and renders communities vulnerable to a host of diseases. In 1950, 27 percent of houses in the United States

environmental racism Institutional policies and practices that differentially affect the health outcomes or living conditions of people and communities based on race or color.

FIGURE 12-3.
Percentages of People of
Color Living in
Neighborhoods with and
Without Toxic Waste
Facilities, in States with
the Largest Discrepancies

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 Twenty 1987–2007: A Report
 Prepared for the United Church
 of Christ Justice & Witness
 Ministries* – [www.ucc.org/
 environmental-ministries_toxic-
 waste-20](http://www.ucc.org/environmental-ministries_toxic-waste-20). Figure 4.3 Copyright
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lacked complete plumbing facilities. By 2000, this percentage had dropped to 0.64 percent—a great improvement. However, nearly 700,000 households, representing 1.7 million people in the United States, continued to live without complete plumbing facilities in 2000, and a half a million households in 2014 still were without plumbing (Byrne 2015). The lack of plumbing continues to disproportionately affect nonwhites. In 2000, 0.47 percent of whites lived without plumbing, compared with 1.1 percent of blacks; 1.47 percent of Hispanics; and 4.41 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives, primarily concentrated on reservations (Rural Community Assistance Partnership n.d.).

Faced with these disparities, communities around the United States have fought to have their communities cleaned up and to gain better access to clean air, water, and soil. These struggles can be contentious, and the possible outcomes are not always clear. What does a community do when it realizes that a toxic waste dump is in its backyard? Should everyone leave? They can't, in good conscience, sell their properties, so are they stuck? As profiled in the first Voices box in this chapter, the struggles of the Holt family in Dickson, Tennessee, put a human face on widespread environmental injustices.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The movement for **environmental justice** focuses on the right to live in nontoxic neighborhoods. Many scholars locate the beginning of the environmental justice movement in the 1980s, when primarily nonwhite communities began to come together and insist on their right to live in nontoxic neighborhoods. Melissa Checker (2006) traces this activism back to earlier struggles to get city services in low-income and primarily black communities. Dorceta Taylor (2009) agrees and argues that blacks' fights for lead screening, Chicano and Filipino struggles against the use of pesticides in agriculture, and Native Americans' battles for fishing rights in the 1950s and 1960s are all part of the movement for environmental justice. Environmental justice movements fight for causes ranging from the creation of parks and open spaces to clean-up efforts by toxic waste producers to clean air and water and other initiatives to improve the health and quality of life in neighborhoods.

environmental justice

Efforts to ensure the right to live in nontoxic neighborhoods, regardless of race.

The Holt Family of Dickson, Tennessee

Dickson, Tennessee, is a town of 12,244 located about thirty-five miles west of Nashville. In 1946, the city of Dickson purchased seventy-four acres of land to be the city's open, unlined dump. In 1964, the Scovill-Schrader automotive company opened a plant that manufactures automotive tire valves and gauges, producing a large amount of hazardous waste. It is no coincidence that both of these hazardous waste sites were opened in the primarily black neighborhood of Eno Road. Dickson County covers nearly 500 square miles. In 2000, the town was only 4.5 percent African American. However, the only cluster of solid waste facilities in the county is located in the Eno Road community.

In 1988, government officials discovered trichloroethylene (TCE)—a suspected carcinogen—in a well that belonged to a black family, the Holts, who lived just fifty-four feet from the Dickson County Landfill. However, government officials told the family that they could continue drinking the water. A couple of years later, similar levels were found in a white family's well, and they were told not to drink the water. By 2000, every member of the Holt family had health problems, including various forms of cancer. In that same year, the Holt family well was retested. This time, Environmental Protection Agency officials found twenty-four times the recommended amount of TCE in the Holt family's drinking water. At that point, the family was given access to city drinking water—years after white families had been provided with that option.

Voices

(continued)



Continued

In 2008, the Holt family filed a lawsuit against the Dickson City and Dickson County governments, seeking redress for the harm inflicted on their family by the contaminated water and racial discrimination. In 2011, the family reached a settlement with the city and county governments for over \$5 million. In addition, they were awarded a \$1.75 million settlement for racial discrimination, since the county had responded to complaints by white residents but not by black residents.

This type of legal victory is relatively rare, as it can be hard to prove that disparities are the result of racial discrimination. Despite the difficulties involved in bringing lawsuits, movements for environmental justice have sprung up around the country.

Source: Bullard 2007, 2012.

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Melissa Checker (2006) conducted an in-depth study of Hyde Park, a black community near Augusta, Georgia, that has long struggled for environmental justice. In 1970, Hyde Park residents won a two-year struggle to get sewage, paved roads, and running water in their community. In many ways, this was both an environmental battle and a battle against racism, as the conditions in the neighborhood during heavy rains were toxic, and the white neighborhoods had long had adequate city services.

In Hyde Park, the struggle for environmental justice is clearly linked to the fight for civil rights. In the late 1960s, Hyde Park residents formed an organization called the Hyde and Aragon Park Improvement Committee (HAPIC) to fight for better services for their neighborhood. This same organization survived over many decades and evolved into a movement for environmental justice during the 1990s, when it became clear that many of the nearby factories were emitting toxic chemicals and poisoning the community. Residents of Hyde Park became increasingly incensed as a junkyard in their neighborhood continued to expand—at times practically into their backyards—and when dust from a ceramics factory left white powder sprinkled on their cars and smelly waters filled their ditches during heavy rains.

Residents began to tie these environmental hazards to high rates of disease and death in their small community of 250 people. For Hyde Park residents, the environmental hazards were evident in the fact that whereas they once were able to grow bountiful gardens, their plots became less productive after the factories and junkyards moved in. In 1991, researchers from the University of Georgia confirmed their suspicions when they found elevated levels of



arsenic and chromium in the local soil and produce and warned residents not to eat the produce from their gardens.

Around that same time, residents of the neighboring Virginia subdivision filed a lawsuit against Southern Wood Piedmont—the local wood-processing plant—for contamination. Although the neighborhoods are very close and the same water travels between them, the primarily white residents of the Virginia subdivision did not include Hyde Park residents in their lawsuit.

Hyde Park residents decided to file their own lawsuit in 1991. When the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) tested the air, water, and soil in Hyde Park, they found weak evidence of contamination. However, when HAPIC commissioned its own studies, a neuropsychologist found a high degree of neurological abnormalities among residents, and a dermatologist found a high rate of arsenical keratosis. For Hyde Park residents, it was clear that they had a high number of health issues and that their neighborhoods were toxic and filled with smelly air and water. EPA testers, however, were unable to find conclusive evidence of a connection between contamination and their illnesses. In all, Hyde Park residents filed three separate lawsuits between 1991 and 1995. One was dismissed, and fifteen years later, the other two were still pending. At the end of the twentieth century, Hyde Park residents were finally able to secure government grants to clean up the toxic waste near their neighborhood and to clear out a junkyard. The struggle for a clean environment, however, continues (Checker 2006).

How is the fight for environmental justice in Hyde Park tied to race? Many of the residents of Hyde Park interpret their experiences through a racial lens: the failure of the local, state, and federal governments to respond to their need is part of a history of exclusion that African Americans have faced since slavery.

▲ Residents of Hyde Park near Augusta, Georgia, faced a long struggle for environmental justice as factories and junkyards polluted their community.

Additionally, African Americans are more likely to live in toxic neighborhoods than whites—meaning that we can tie their plight to structural racism in the United States insofar as environmental rules, laws, and policies reproduce historical racial disparities.

The struggle in Hyde Park is decidedly local: residents of this Georgia community experienced the direct effects of the emission of toxins by industrial facilities that were right in their community. They won a small victory when some of the toxic waste was cleaned up. But where did that waste go? It is conceivable that it went to another country. Ninety percent of the hazardous waste in the world is produced in industrialized nations such as the United States, Japan, and European countries. Much of it is eventually shipped to Latin America, the Caribbean, South and Southeast Asia, and Africa. In some cases, environmental clean-up in the United States can have detrimental effects on poor countries that accept the hazardous waste in exchange for much-needed cash (Pellow 2007).

The United States has only 5 percent of the world's population, yet generates 19 percent of the world's waste. The waste output of residents of the United States is the highest in the world (Pellow 2007). Within the United States, there is continued controversy over what to do with the waste. One solution is to incinerate it. However, this produces incinerator ashes, which also must be disposed of.

In 1986, the mayor of Philadelphia found himself with 15,000 tons of incinerator ash, and nowhere to dump it. Local environmental activists had succeeded in closing the Kinsley landfill, and Philadelphia found itself with tons of ash. The city contracted a local company to get rid of the ash, which in turn handed it over to Amalgamated Shipping, a company headquartered in the Bahamas. The shipping company loaded the ashes onto the *Khian Sea*, and the ship set sail for the Bahamas on September 5, 1986. However, officials in the Bahamas refused to accept the toxic waste, which then traveled to the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Guinea-Bissau, Puerto Rico, Bermuda, and the Dutch Antilles. Each port refused to accept the waste. Finally, in December 1987, the boat landed at Gonaives, Haiti, where the captain was able to work out an agreement with the military regime, in part because he told them the ash was fertilizer. The crew succeeded in unloading 3,700 tons of ash onto the beach before local activists and authorities became suspicious and were able to stop the dumping. The ship left Haiti, leaving the ashes on the beach. The *Khian Sea* continued its journey, unable to get rid of the remaining waste. The ship's captain later admitted he dumped the ashes in the middle of the Indian Ocean several months later. But, the 3,700 tons of ash dumped on the beaches of Gonaives still remained. It took

years of local and international activism until the toxic ash was finally removed from Haiti in April 2000.

The story of the *Khian Sea* is part of a story of global environmental injustice. Wealthier countries consume more resources than poorer ones and thus produce more waste. This global inequality is exacerbated when wealthy countries dump their waste in poorer countries. These inequalities are also drawn along racial lines: western European countries and the United States attempt to dump their waste in Africa and the Caribbean.

The Flint Water Crisis

In March 2016, the Flint Water Advisory Task Force Report found that the residents of Flint, Michigan, a majority-black and overwhelmingly poor city, had been exposed to environmental and health hazards due to water-supply decisions made by city officials. The report also showed that these decisions were made with outright disregard for the lives and health of the residents of Flint, Michigan.

For nearly five decades, Flint had obtained clean drinking water from Lake Huron, the third largest body of fresh water in the world. Beginning in June 2012, however, in an effort to save money, Flint city officials began to seek out alternative water sources. At the time, Flint was on the verge of financial collapse, and the city was being run by a governor-appointed emergency manager, Darnell Earley. City officials calculated that Flint could save \$200 million over twenty-five years if it built its own pipeline to derive water from the Karegnondi Water Authority (KWA). However, by 2014, it became clear that the transition to the KWA would be delayed. Officials then decided to connect a temporary pipeline to obtain water from the Flint River, beginning in April 2014.



Residents of Flint pick up bottled water and water filters from Red Cross disaster relief volunteers.

Voices

(continued)



Continued

City officials received advice that they should add an anticorrosive element to the water, but they decided not to do this because it would cost \$100 a day. The Flint River water was highly corrosive, however, and shortly after the switch to it, residents began to complain about the water’s smell and color. In August 2014, test of the water revealed the presence of *E. coli* and total coliform bacteria. Residents were advised to boil their water before consuming it. They began to complain of skin rashes and hair loss, among other issues, as they became ill due to the water. City officials ignored nearly all complaints. In fall 2014, only one complaint was finally answered—that of General Motors.

The owners of the General Motors factory in Flint had become concerned about the water quality, as it was causing their car parts to corrode. In October 2014, they complained to Governor Rick Snyder, who used \$440,000 of state funds to reconnect the factory to the Lake Huron pipeline. Nevertheless, the other residents of Flint remained connected to the contaminated Flint River water.

In January 2015, Flint was found to be in violation of the Safe Drinking Water Act. A month later, the water was found to contain extremely high levels of lead, a highly toxic element. In September, a local study reported that following the switch to the Flint River water, twice as many children under the age of five had elevated levels of lead in their blood.

In October 2015, Flint switched back to the Lake Huron water supply, but the corroded, lead-tainted pipes were still in use. One year later, in 2016, many residents continued to distrust the city’s government and to doubt the water’s safety. Two years later, in 2017, Flint still did not have clean water.

Sources: Bosman, Davey, and Smith 2016; Kennedy 2016; *New York Times* 2016; Sanburn 2017.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

During slavery, medical professionals had no qualms about using slaves as involuntary subjects in medical experiments. We no longer live in such brutal times, but we can’t ignore our legacy. One hundred and fifty years after the abolition of slavery, whites continue to receive better medical care than blacks. Moreover, it is hard to say that white and black lives are equally valued when black life expectancy continues to be years lower than that of whites.

The ability to breathe clean air, eat healthy food, have access to good medical care, and spend time outside in green spaces all lead to better health outcomes.

In this way, the movement for environmental justice is intimately tied to the fight against health disparities.

Outright disregard for people of color informed the decisions made by industry and local leaders in the early twentieth century to place toxic waste facilities in primarily nonwhite neighborhoods. These same sentiments meant that nonwhite neighborhoods and towns were often the last to receive sewage infrastructure and piped water in their homes. By 2000, most communities had clean water, but nonwhite households continue to be the most likely to lack basic services.

Social scientists and public health scholars have provided the data we need to see the persistence of these disparities. These scientific studies leave little room for doubt that white Americans, on average, have better access to clean air and water and healthy communities than do nonwhite Americans. People of color in the United States and around the world are the most likely to have to contend with the health and environmental consequences of toxic dumping.

How do we explain these disparities? In each chapter, we have seen how racial ideologies help explain and justify inequalities. When looking at health and the environment, we can also uncover ideologies that serve this purpose, such as the misconception that African Americans are not interested in healthy eating and exercise. Such ideologies blame African Americans for their high prevalence of heart disease and diabetes while overlooking the structural reasons for health disparities, such as the lack of fresh vegetables and safe places to exercise in black neighborhoods.

One of the United States' core values is the right of everyone to have an equal opportunity to flourish. How does the ideology of equal opportunity coexist with the reality that nonwhites have less access than whites to education, to jobs, and to services and circumstances that promote health? How is this discord related to racial ideologies?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

Nuremberg Code	348	weathering hypothesis	356	environmental racism	361
life-course perspective	356	Hispanic Paradox	357	environmental justice	363
cumulative disadvantage perspective	356	acculturation	357		

12.1 What is the racial history of health disparities in the United States? (pp. 345–348)

- During and even following slavery, African Americans were subjected to involuntary experimentation that was often brutal and had no therapeutic effects.

Review

- » What is involuntary experimentation?
- » Why was the Nuremberg code important?

Critical Thinking

- » Why is it important to understand the history of health injustice in the United States?
- » What factors led doctors to conduct cruel experiments on African Americans?

12.2 How do health disparities in the United States today vary by race and ethnicity? (pp. 348–361)

- African Americans have lower life expectancies than whites, and racial disparities in health can be found from the womb to the deathbed. Many of these disparities are due to structural and individual-level discrimination.

Review

- » Describe the differences in infant mortality rates for black and white women.
- » How are health disparities related to segregation?
- » Why has diabetes become a problem for Native Americans?
- » How can racial discrimination affect health?
- » What is a life-course perspective on health disparities?
- » What is the Hispanic Paradox?

Critical Thinking

- » How does our understanding of health disparities change when we take into account both race and socioeconomic status?
- » Is segregation at the root of health disparities? Or are there more deeply rooted causes? Explain your position.
- » What role do you think acculturation plays in explaining the Hispanic Paradox?

12.3 What are the effects of environmental racism? (pp. 361–362)

- Black and Latino neighborhoods are more likely to host toxic waste facilities than white neighborhoods. These facilities have negative health outcomes for the residents.

Review

- » How prevalent is environmental racism?

Critical Thinking

- » What are some reasons that genetic explanations for health disparities may be problematic?

12.4 What are some community movements for environmental justice? (pp. 363–368)

- The fight for clean neighborhoods has come to be called the environmental justice movement.

Review

- » How did the environmental justice movement get started?

Critical Thinking

- » How is the fight against toxins in Hyde Park related to race and racism?

Talking about Race

In light of this chapter's data on racial disparities in health outcomes, consider the findings most relevant to your own experiences. What information in this chapter could you draw from to have a conversation about health disparities and environmental racism in your community? For example, does your family live in a neighborhood with access to healthy food and green spaces? What structural explanations might explain why or why not? How are racial ideologies used to explain persistent health disparities?



Homeless. Dane Chanase. 1930. Oil on panel, 72 × 48 in. (*Photograph by Meredith Keffer, courtesy of Beverly Sacks Fine Art Inc.*)

Racism, Nativism, and Immigration Policy

As You Read

- 13.1** How does the history of U.S. immigration policy reflect racism and nativism?
- 13.2** How has U.S. policy responded to undocumented immigration?
- 13.3** What is the relationship between nativism and racism in the twenty-first century?

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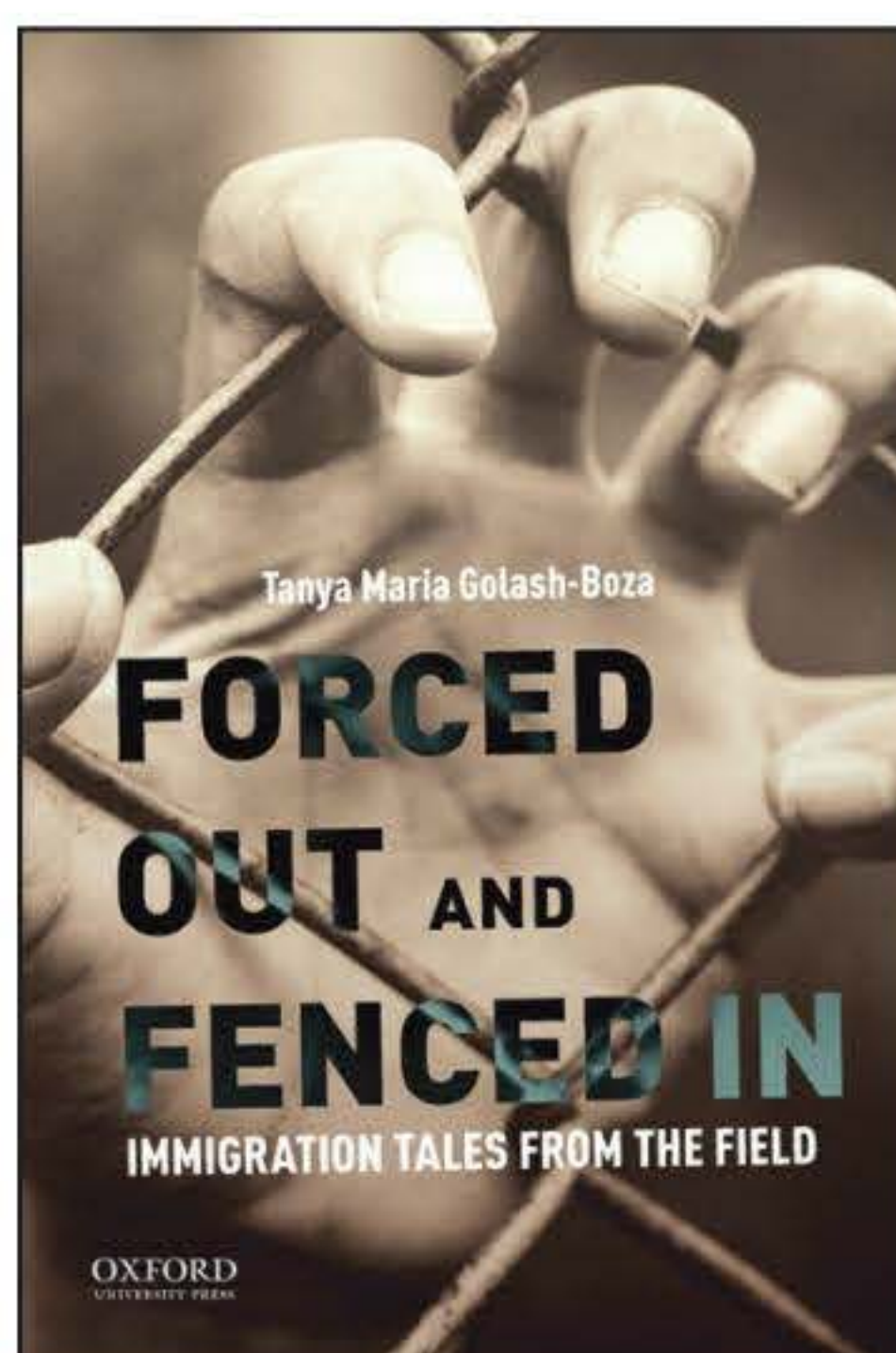
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Article 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)—which the United States has ratified—states, “[T]he family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state.” It further states that all men and women have the right “to marry and to found a family.” Because the United States has ratified this covenant, we have a responsibility to uphold these principles. Immigration law, however, is often at odds with the human right to have a family. The story of Ramón and Lupita illustrates how U.S. immigration policy can tear families apart.

Ramón and Lupita met in California in 1995. They were both originally from Mexico City, and both had migrated to California as young adults in search of work. Ramón arrived in California in the early 1980s as an undocumented immigrant, and in 1986, he applied to become a lawful permanent US resident through the IRCA amnesty program. Lupita came to the United States without papers in 1992, after the amnesty program had ended.

When Ramón and Lupita got married in the late 1990s, Ramón could have filed a petition for Lupita’s lawful residency then. But the wait for such a process was long—about four years at the time—and a new law, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996, had made the process more difficult. Lupita and Ramón were afraid they might be separated if they filed, and they decided to wait and hope for another change in law, maybe even another amnesty program, that would allow Lupita to change her status without risking separation from Ramón.

Over the course of the next ten years, Ramón and Lupita lived in California as a mixed-status family, and they had three US citizen children together—all boys. In 2005, they moved to Chicago and bought a house on the city’s south side. Then, in 2008, Ramón became a US citizen. Because he was now a US citizen, the process for getting Lupita’s residency would be much shorter. And with no immigration reform on the horizon, they decided to stop waiting and apply to change Lupita’s immigration status.

Ramón and Lupita consulted with an attorney and began filing the paperwork and paying the fees they would need for Lupita’s application for a “green card,” or immigrant visa that confers lawful residency. First, Ramón filed a “family

petition,” which would make Lupita eligible to apply for a green card based on their marriage. After that petition was approved, Lupita received a notice in the mail with the date and time of an interview with a US Department of State official. Because Lupita is a Mexican citizen and she had never legally entered the United States, her interview was scheduled at the US consulate in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

The week before Lupita’s interview, on a warm June day in 2011, Ramón, Lupita, and their three sons drove to O’Hare airport, where Lupita boarded a plane headed for Ciudad Juárez. Lupita had to get a physical examination in Juárez, and then have her fingerprints taken before the day of the interview. On the morning of her interview, Lupita arrived at the US consulate in Juárez early. There were hundreds of people already lined up outside, most of them clutching thick files of paperwork. Lupita entered the consulate with her own thick file, was handed a number, and then sat down to wait for her turn to speak with an agent.

When Lupita’s number was called, she walked up to a long countertop, where an official was seated behind a thick pane of glass. Lupita slid her file under the glass and explained that she had come to the United States nearly twenty years earlier. Now that she had a US citizen husband and three US citizen children, she told him, she hoped she could change her status. The agent reviewed Lupita’s paperwork, then informed her that her application for a green card was denied; in fact, he said, she would not be able to return to the United States at all. “For how long?” she asked him. “Ninety-nine,” answered the officer. “Ninety-nine what?” Lupita asked. “Ninety-nine years.” Stunned, Lupita left the consulate to call Ramón and break the news. When I met Ramón and the three boys at their Chicago home a month later, they were still in shock—reeling from the blow of Lupita’s unexpected banishment and unsure how to move forward.

Source: Gomberg-Muñoz in Golash-Boza 2018, 67–68.

Lupita is one of thousands of people barred annually from returning to the United States, where her family lives. Lupita’s application was denied because she had returned once to Mexico and reentered illegally. As her case shows, U.S. immigration policy is often harsh and unforgiving. Today, as in the past, the country’s punitive immigration policies primarily affect people who are considered nonwhite.

This chapter examines the history of immigration policy in the United States and the extent to which racist and nativist sentiments have played a role in this policy and legislation. Although U.S. immigration policy has shifted dramatically over the years, two trends have remained constant: (1) nativism has always been an integral part of policy debates, and (2) the policy and its consequences have been more disadvantageous to people considered nonwhite than to those considered white. What has changed over time is the removal of explicitly discriminatory language from U.S. immigration laws. Here we will consider the racially disparate consequences of immigration laws and policies.



Robert Bautista—Denied Due Process

In 2009, immigration agents arrested Robert Bautista as he was returning from vacation in the Dominican Republic, his country of birth. Once arrested, Mr. Bautista was placed in detention without the possibility of a bond hearing. He had been a legal permanent resident of the United States for twenty-five years, had been married for over a decade, had three school-age children, and was the owner of a successful business in Pennsylvania. His mandatory detention caused his business to be destroyed and his family to lose their home. His wife, a U.S. citizen, visits Mr. Bautista every week at York County Prison, often bringing the children with her. Their children, all of whom are U.S. citizens, must bear witness to their father being treated as if he were a criminal, but without the procedural protections normally accorded to people charged with crimes.

Mr. Bautista's two years in immigration detention are not pursuant to any criminal convictions. In 2002, Mr. Bautista was found guilty of third-degree attempted arson for carrying a container of gasoline near his own vehicle and was sentenced to five years of probation. By 2009, he had completed his probation. When immigration agents arrested and detained him, it was not because he was charged with a crime. Instead, he was detained because he faced deportation and was not eligible for a bond hearing.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) detained Robert Bautista on the grounds that his 2002 conviction of third-degree attempted arson was a crime involving moral turpitude (CIMT). Because of this prior conviction, Mr. Bautista was considered to be seeking admission to the United States, as if he were not present in the country and as if he had not been living and working lawfully in the country for over two decades. As a person not technically inside the United States, Mr. Bautista was not protected by the Constitution. With a record of a CIMT, Mr. Bautista could still seek out cancellation of removal: his deportation order could be rescinded.



Just one hour before his hearing, however, DHS made an additional argument: that third-degree attempted arson is also an aggravated felony, meaning that Mr. Bautista would be subject to mandatory detention and deportation without judicial review.

Mr. Bautista's lawyer, Raymond Lahoud, contested this classification, as no previous case of third-degree attempted arson had been declared to be an aggravated felony. If Mr. Bautista could win the argument that it was not, an immigration judge would have the chance to hear the equities in his case. But in an aggravated felony case, it does not matter if you have lived in the United States for three decades, if you have three children, if you have no relatives in your country of origin, or if your family depends on you for their survival. Noncitizens convicted of aggravated felonies are not given a fair and reasonable hearing of the sort that would meet international human rights standards.

In October 2011, the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) heard Mr. Bautista's case and decided that third-degree attempted arson is an aggravated felony. This determination means that Mr. Bautista could not challenge his deportation on the basis of his ties to the United States. Instead, he faced mandatory deportation to the Dominican Republic, where he would be labeled a criminal deportee and face a bleak future. The Dominican government treats arriving criminal deportees as if they are criminals. They are booked at the city jail, and their deportation is recorded on their criminal record, making it nearly impossible to secure employment.

If Mr. Bautista had been afforded the due process protections we give to criminals, he would have had a bond hearing and likely would not have been detained for over two years. Instead, he would have had the opportunity for a trial in which a judge could weigh the equities in his case, and he may have been eligible for a public defender. Mr. Bautista was fortunate that a lawyer decided to take his case pro bono. With the help of this lawyer, in February 2014, in an appeals case, the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals found that third-degree attempted arson is not an aggravated felony, thereby overturning the BIA decision and permitting Bautista to apply for cancellation of removal.

Source: Golash-Boza 2012; *Bautista v. Attorney General of the United States*, No. A038-509-855 (3rd Cir. LAR 34.1(a) September 20, 2012).

As Robert Bautista's story in the Voices sidebar makes clear, U.S. immigration policy can be draconian—even long-term legal residents can have their rights stripped away for minor transgressions. In this chapter, we explore both the history of U.S. immigration policy and present-day laws and policies. This

nativism The presumed superiority of native-born citizens, favoring the allocation of resources to them over immigrants and promoting a fear of foreign cultures.

historical overview shows that immigration policy is severe in targeting people defined as outsiders to the nation. Lawmakers consistently have used immigration policy to influence the racial and ethnic makeup of the nation. In this process, racism has often become indistinguishable from **nativism**, which presumes the superiority of native-born citizens.

Immigration policy continues to be at the forefront of the political agenda in the United States today. It is hard to imagine a time when the country had no immigration policy, yet just one hundred years ago, there was no Border Patrol, and passports and visas were not required for entry to the United States. When the United States began to pass immigration laws governing the entry and residency conditions of the foreign-born at the end of the nineteenth century, the laws were overtly racialized and expressed a clear preference for people from northern and western Europe.

THE RACIALIZED HISTORY OF
U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY

The history of U.S. immigration policy is a reflection of societal racism and nativism. Whereas racism presumes the superiority of a racial group, nativism favors the allocation of resources to native-born citizens over immigrants and promotes a fear of foreign cultures. As various scholars have noted (e.g., Sanchez 1997; Johnson 2004; Lippard 2011), racist nativism is a prominent feature of contemporary American society: the fear of foreigners is clearly racialized, and nativist sentiments are directed at particular racial groups, such as Mexicans and people from the Middle East. Through an examination of the history of immigration policy and nativist responses to immigration, we will see how nativism and racism have been intertwined in U.S. history and how nativism today is distinct from that of the past.

U.S. Immigration and Deportation Policy

1790	1882	1924	1924	1924	1942–1964	1943
Naturalization Law	Chinese Exclusion Act	Immigration Act (Johnson-Reed Act)	Oriental Exclusion Act	Creation of Border Patrol	Bracero program	Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Act

Race and the Making of U.S. Immigration Policies: 1790 to 1924

The United States was a sovereign nation for a full century before immigration restrictions became a subject of political debate, let alone law. Although the country did not begin to pass immigration laws until the late 1800s, Congress passed an important piece of legislation in 1790 related to people born abroad. The Naturalization Law of 1790, discussed in Chapter Two, was not an immigration policy in that it did not regulate entry. Instead, it stated that only free white persons who had lived in the United States for at least two years were eligible for citizenship. This first piece of legislation related to the foreign-born is particularly notable because it contained a racialized provision, defining citizenship as accessible solely to whites. The purpose of this clause was to deny citizenship to African-descended slaves, and it was later used to deny Asians naturalization or the granting of citizenship after birth.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the first major piece of immigration legislation was the Chinese Exclusion Act, signed into law in 1882. This act denied entry to one specific group: Chinese laborers. In specifically excluding a group because of race and class, the Chinese Exclusion Act set the stage for twentieth-century immigration policy, which had both overt and covert racial and class biases (Lee 2002). Although the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed in 1943, the court cases that stemmed from it continue to shape how we treat immigrants today.

An 1893 landmark Supreme Court case, *Fong Yue Ting v. United States*, involved three Chinese nationals who claimed they deserved constitutional protections in their deportation cases. The court held that the power to deport noncitizens was inherent in the nature of sovereignty and that constitutional protections, including the right to a trial by jury, did not apply. This case defined deportation as simply an administrative procedure and not a punishment. The idea of deportation as a nonpunitive action was based on a distinction between deportation and banishment. Banishment removes a person from a country

1950–1954	1965	1986	1996	1996	1996	2012
Operation Wetback	Immigration and Nationality Act	Immigration Reform and Control Act	Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA)	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA)	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

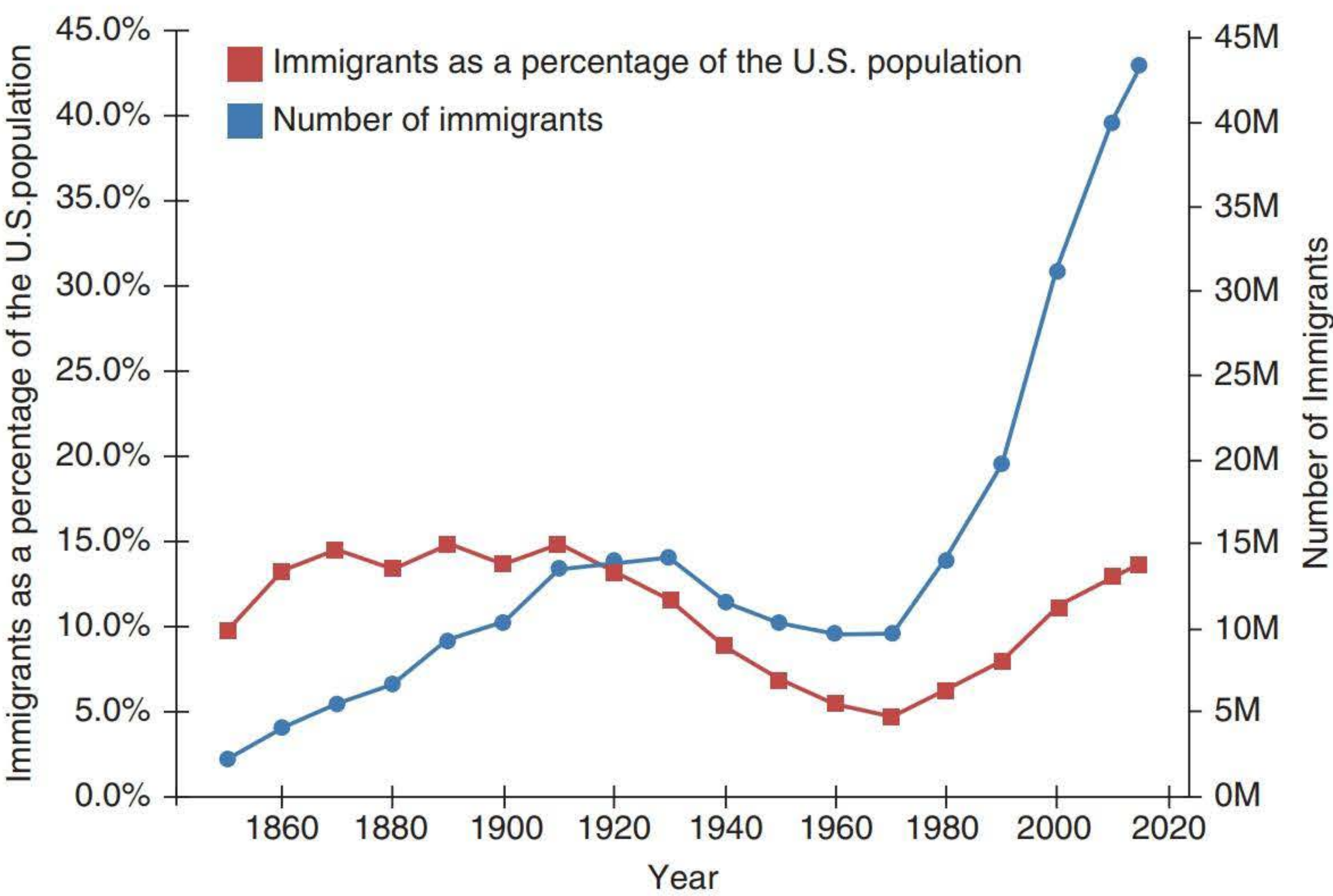
where he or she belongs, whereas deportation returns a person to where he or she belongs and thus is not considered punishment. According to the *Fong Yue Ting* decision, which still holds in court today, deportation is a procedure to ensure that people abide by the terms of their visas. When they do not, they face the possibility of being returned to where they belong. It is remarkable that this court decision, which was made in the context of strong anti-Chinese sentiment, continues to hold the status of legal precedent today.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in the midst of a great wave of immigrants from both Europe and China. In the 1840s, the United States began to experience large-scale immigration for the first time since its founding. This influx dramatically changed both the country’s cultural landscape and its official stance toward immigrants. Between 1841 and 1850, 1.7 million immigrants arrived in the United States (see Figure 13-1), and in the following decade, 2.6 million arrived. In 1870, immigrants constituted nearly 14 percent of the total population. In each subsequent decade until 1924, millions continued to arrive. Toward the end of this wave of immigrants in the early twentieth century, the United States began to implement policies governing the entry of the foreign-born.

In 1924, the U.S. Congress implemented three restrictive measures that effectively cut off immigration from most countries. The first of these measures was the overtly racialized Immigration Act of 1924, or the

FIGURE 13-1.
Immigrants as Total
Number and as a
Percentage of the
U.S. Population,
1850 to 2015

Source: Migration Policy Institute
(2015).



Johnson-Reed Act (Chapter Two), which greatly reduced immigration from southern and eastern Europe by introducing quotas, or limits on the number of people from these countries allowed to enter the United States. The next major piece of immigration legislation was the 1924 **Oriental Exclusion Act**, which expanded the Chinese Exclusion Act and prohibited most immigration from Asia. The motivation for both of these laws, as explained in Chapter Two, was to improve the racial stock of the United States. The final measure implemented in 1924 was the creation of the Border Patrol to prevent illegal entry into the United States. These restrictive measures were effective: immigration dropped drastically and did not pick up again until the 1960s, when the national origin quotas were expanded and the overtly racial nature of the immigration laws was rescinded.

Oriental Exclusion Act
1924 legislation that expanded the Chinese Exclusion Act and prohibited most immigration from Asia to the United States.

Whitening and Immigration Policy in Brazil

After the abolition of slavery in 1888, with a large ex-slave and free black and mulatto population, and under the specter of scientific racism, the Brazilian government openly promoted whitening through European immigration. In addition, the government paid white immigrants' passage to Brazil. In the four decades after emancipation, over 2 million European immigrants arrived in São Paulo alone, nearly a million of whom had their passages paid for by the state government (Andrews 1991, 54).

Despite substantial European immigration, Brazil never transformed into a white nation. North American and European intellectuals lamented Brazil's large nonwhite population and predicted a dim future for the country. In response, Brazilian intellectuals developed their own ideas of racial progress. This new ideology put forth the mulatto as Brazil's hope for the future. Through whitening, Brazil would be able to progress from black to mulatto to white. By the early twentieth century, Brazilian scholars confidently reported that the whitening of Brazil was well under way and that concerns about inferior racial elements could be quelled (Skidmore 1993).

Brazilian intellectuals accepted European ideas of white superiority but rejected the notion that racial mixture was degenerative. They argued that Brazil was becoming a white nation through *mestizaje*—racial and cultural mixture. Many Brazilian thinkers embraced this whitening theory, as it provided them with the ideological framework for their nation-building project (Eakin 1985). At the same time, scholars such as Oliveira Vianna (1883–1951), a lawyer and historian, demonstrated that the white population was increasing. Vianna compared Brazil's 1872 and 1890 censuses and argued that whites had increased from 38 to 44 percent of the Brazilian population, while blacks had fallen from 20 percent to under 15 percent (Skidmore 1993). Through a combination of European immigration and whitening through intermarriage, Brazilian intellectuals in the early twentieth century were confident their country would eventually become whitened.

Sources: Andrews 1991; Skidmore 1993; Eakin 1985.

legal permanent resident

A foreign national who is granted the right to remain in the United States and who will be eligible for naturalization after a period of three to five years.

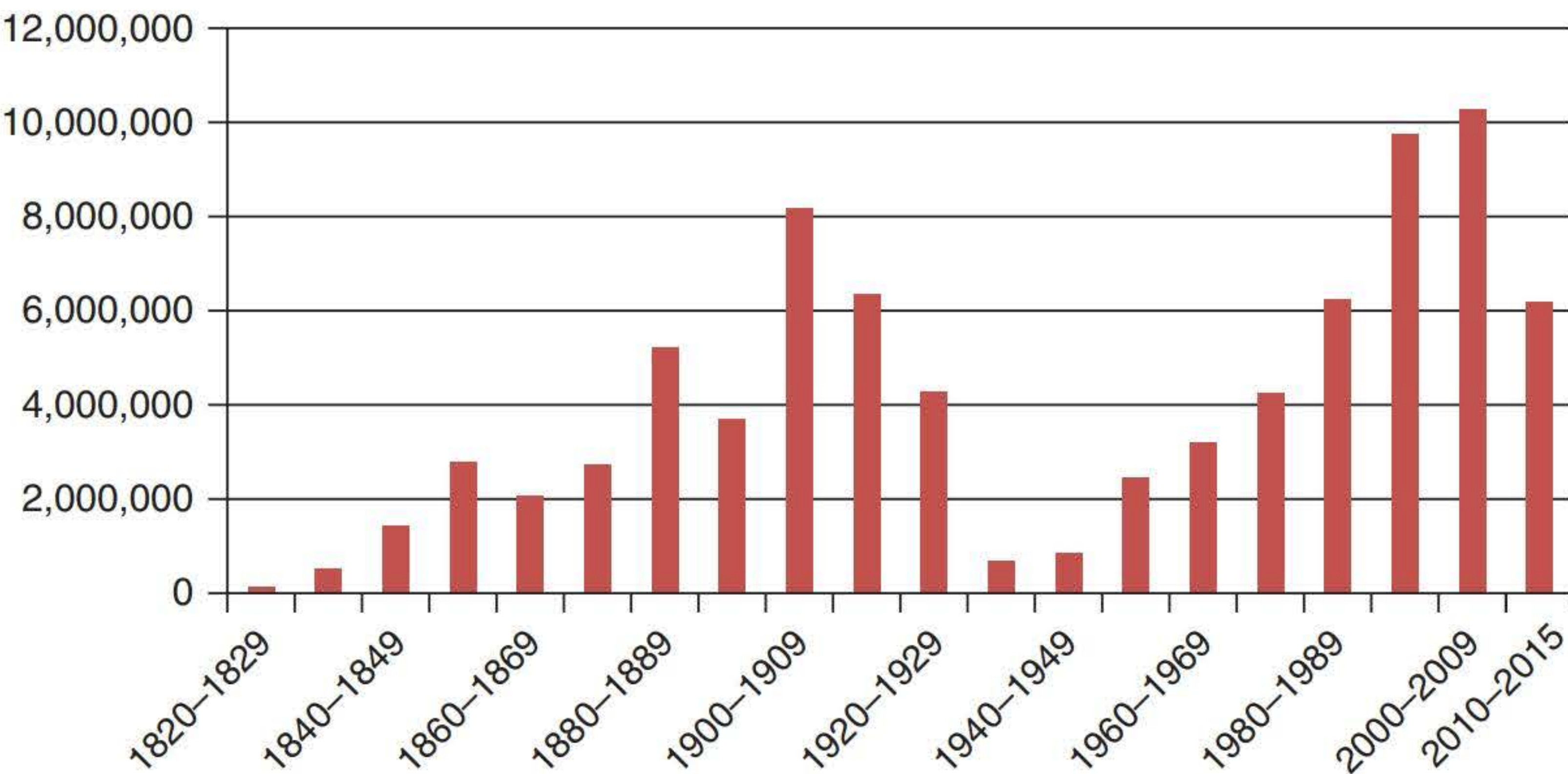
Nativism Between 1924 and 1964: Mass Deportation of Mexicans and the McCarran Internal Security Act

The period between 1924 and 1964 was an exceptional period in U.S. history in that the country welcomed relatively few immigrants. The 1924 measures significantly curbed the flow of immigrants until the 1965 overhaul of U.S. immigration laws. These trends are evident in Figure 13-1 and in Figure 13-2, which displays the number of people who attained legal permanent resident status by decade. A **legal permanent resident** is a foreign national who is granted the right to remain in the United States and who will be eligible for naturalization after a period of three to five years. To become a U.S. citizen today, a legal permanent resident must have been a permanent resident for at least five years if he or she is not married to a U.S. citizen for at least three years if he or she is the spouse of a U.S. citizen. The applicant must also be a person of good moral character; have basic knowledge of U.S. history and government; and, in most cases, be able to read, write, and speak basic English. In addition, the applicant must pay the filing fees, which were \$725 in 2017.

Mexicans have a long history of immigration to the United States. The first group of Mexicans to enter the United States were not immigrants, however, but became Americans following the U.S. takeover of large swaths of Mexican land under the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The first substantial wave of Mexican immigrants came between 1910 and 1930, when the Mexican immigrant population tripled from 200,000 to 600,000. This wave was due largely to instability caused by the Mexican Revolution and to the growth of agribusiness in the United States (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002; Ngai 2004; Hernandez 2010).

FIGURE 13-2.
Number of People
Attaining Legal Permanent
Resident Status in the
United States, 1820–2015

Source: U.S. Department of
Homeland Security, Office of
Immigration Statistics (2015).





< Mexican workers in a flax field, 1946.

The second wave of Mexican immigration came during the **bracero program** (1942–1964). Under this program, created by the U.S. government to meet labor shortages caused by World War II, 4.6 million Mexicans, called *braceros* (a Spanish term that can be roughly translated as “farmhands”), came to work in agriculture in the United States. Mexicans also continued to immigrate to the United States illegally because not all workers qualified for the bracero program and the costs associated with immigrating as a bracero were prohibitive to some.

The United States carried out mass deportations of Mexicans twice during this period, first in the 1930s and again in the 1950s, when the bracero program was in full swing. The United States deported 1,751 Mexicans in 1925, but this number increased dramatically to 15,000 in 1929, when the U.S. stock market crash triggered the onset of the Great Depression. Subsequently, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, in cooperation with local officials, mounted a repatriation campaign, under which over 400,000 people of Mexican origin were returned to Mexico (Ngai 2004). In the 1950s, the U.S. Border Patrol deported over a million Mexican immigrants under Operation Wetback.

Operation Wetback

World War II created a Mexican American middle class, and during this time Mexicans were also accorded an improved social standing in the borderlands.

bracero program A U.S. government program that brought in temporary workers from Mexico between 1942 and 1964.

Operation Wetback

Massive roundups of Mexicans by the U.S. Border Patrol from 1950 to 1954.

McCarran Internal Security Act

A 1950 U.S. law designed to combat Communism. It required members of the Communist Party in the United States to register with the federal government, and it allowed for the deportation of foreign nationals who were members of the Communist Party.

1965 Immigration and Nationality Act

Legislation that put an end to the racially biased quotas set forth in the 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act and the Immigration Act of 1924. It set a universal quota of 20,000 immigrants for every country in the world.

By the late 1940s, “No Mexicans Allowed” signs had disappeared, and high schools were increasingly integrated. At the same time, the Border Patrol became more firmly entrenched as part of the federal government, meaning that its policies often reflected Washington’s interests more than local interests along the border. This shift created tensions, as ranchers and farmers in Texas wanted to employ undocumented Mexicans, whereas it was the duty of Border Patrol agents to stop immigrants from crossing over (Hernandez 2010).

In 1950, the Border Patrol began massive roundups of Mexicans in a series of operations that would come to be known as **Operation Wetback**. One example of an Operation Wetback raid happened on July 30, 1952. At dawn, about one hundred Border Patrol agents began to arrest Mexicans by the hundreds in an area near Brownsville, Texas. By the end of the day, they had made 5,000 arrests and had transported all of those people to the bridge that led back to Mexico. These sorts of roundups continued through 1954. In October 1954, the Border Patrol announced it had deported more than one million Mexican immigrants. These mass arrests created fear and tension in immigrant communities, as Mexicans were forced to leave their loved ones, their belongings, and their lives in the United States and return to Mexico (Hernandez 2010).

The McCarran Internal Security Act

Mexicans were not the only target of nativism during this period; at the same time, the United States was gripped by a pervasive fear of Communism, which was portrayed as a product of foreign influence. The **McCarran Internal Security Act**, signed into law in 1950, was designed to combat Communism, both outside and within the borders of the United States. Anyone in the United States who was affiliated with the Communist Party was required to register with the federal government. In addition, this act allowed for the deportation of foreign nationals who were members of the Communist Party. Between 1946 and 1966, deportation proceedings were initiated against 15,000 foreign nationals on ideological grounds (primarily because they were Communists or suspected Communists). Of the 15,000 people put into deportation proceedings, 253 were deported. Deportation for ideological reasons remained legal until the Immigration Act of 1990 repealed these provisions (Török 2004).

The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act and the Changing Face of Immigration

One of the most significant changes to U.S. immigration law in the twentieth century was the **1965 Immigration and Nationality Act**, also called the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act. This act put an end to the racially biased quotas set

forth in the 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act and the Immigration Act of 1924. In the spirit of the civil rights movement, the 1965 act set a universal quota of 20,000 immigrants for every country in the world. Each country could send up to 20,000 qualified immigrants a year, with no racial restrictions. Potential immigrants could now qualify for entry based on either family ties to the United States (relatives could petition for their entry) or their skills (employers could request immigrants based on their skills and education). The 1965 act had two main consequences: (1) it increased immigration from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean; and (2) it increased undocumented immigration from Mexico.

Asian Immigration

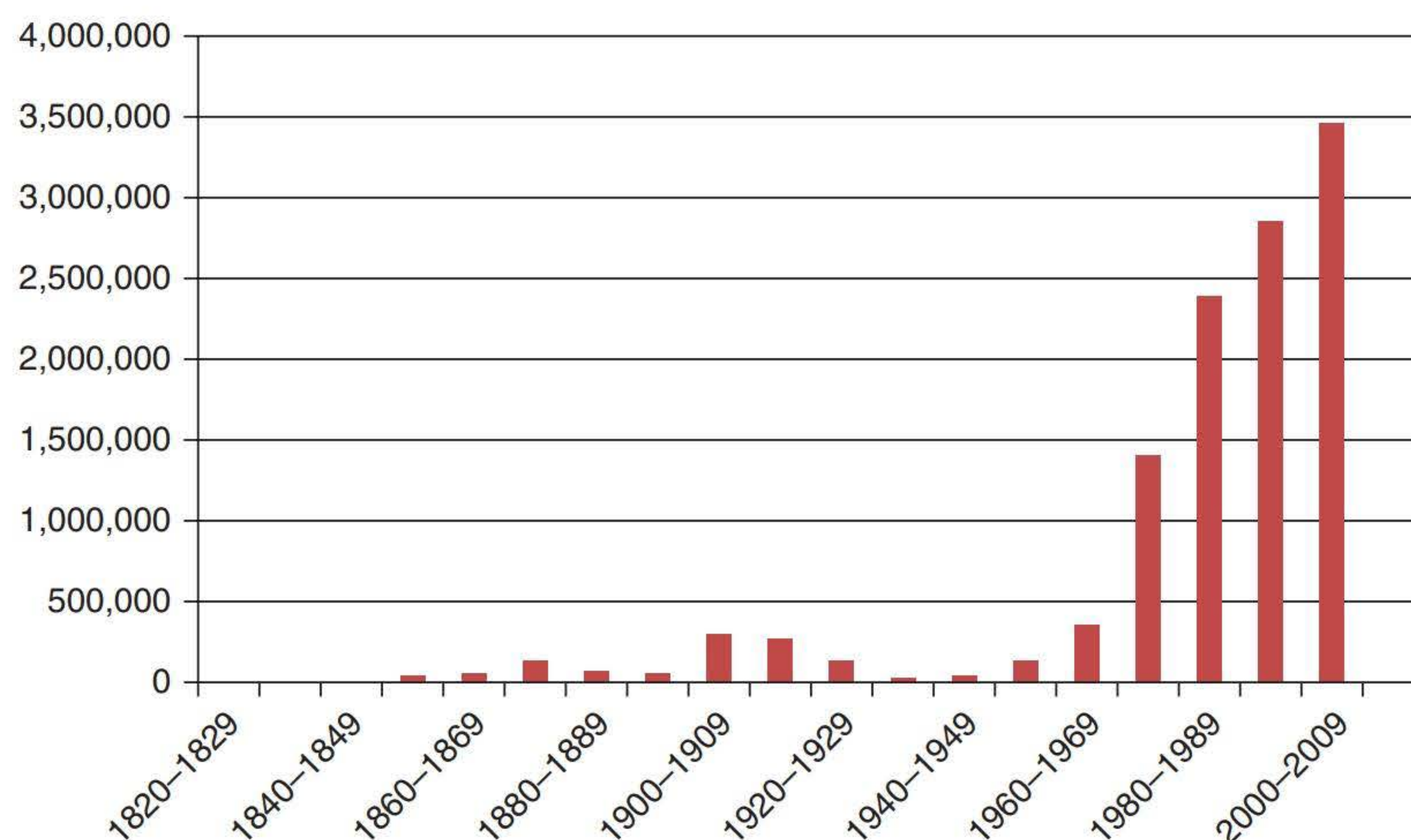
Historically, immigrants from India, China, Japan, the Philippines, and Korea had come to the United States to work as laborers. However, the longstanding prohibitions on Asian immigration between 1882 and 1965 greatly decreased Asian immigration. The 1965 act opened up the possibility of immigration from Asia by removing racial quotas, and large numbers of Asians began to migrate to the United States once again.

Between 1820 and 1849, only 210 people came to the United States from Asia as legal permanent residents. In the 1850s, 36,080 people from Asia became legal permanent residents. Asian immigration peaked in the first decade of the twentieth century, with nearly 300,000 people from Asia becoming legal permanent residents. After the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act, this number dropped off, and only 19,231 Asians gained legal permanent residency in the 1930s. Asian immigration again increased in the 1950s to 135,000 and then increased exponentially to nearly 1.5 million in the 1970s, 2.4 million in the 1980s, and 2.9 million in the 1990s (see Figure 13-3). In the first decade of the twentieth century, almost 3.5 million Asians became legal permanent residents. The most prominent countries of origin of Asian immigrants today are China, the Philippines, India, Korea, and Vietnam—each with its own history of immigration to the United States. By 2015, Asia was the largest sending region for legal permanent residents. In that year, 419,297 Asians (40 percent of the total) became legal permanent residents of the United States (Baugh and Wistman 2017).

Immigration from Asia increased dramatically with the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. Asians did not come from every country in the region, but specifically from countries with which the United States had longstanding ties. In fact, with the exception of Vietnam, those Asian countries that send large numbers of immigrant to the United States today

FIGURE 13-3.
Number of Asians to Attain
Legal U.S. Permanent
Resident Status, by Decade

Source: U.S. Department of
Homeland Security, Office of
Immigration Statistics (2010).



are the same countries that sent substantial numbers of immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These immigration patterns can be directly linked to both family ties and high skills provisions in the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act.

Chinese Immigration

Chinese immigrants to the United States predate many other immigrant groups; the large-scale migration of Chinese to the United States began when U.S. contractors recruited laborers to build railroads in the mid-nineteenth century. Around the same time, recruiters in Hawaii (which would not become a U.S. state until 1959) brought tens of thousands of Chinese to work in agriculture and other industries. Chinese immigration peaked in the 1870s, with 133,000 Chinese becoming legal permanent residents of the United States. Following the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, however, immigration dropped off dramatically and did not begin to rise again until decades after the act was repealed in 1943.

Following the 1943 repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese immigration to the United States slowly began to pick up again. The presence of Chinese immigrants and their descendants in the United States facilitated future waves of immigration. In the 1980s, 171,000 Chinese immigrated to the United States. Chinese immigration increased in the next decade to 342,000 and to 592,000 in the first decade of the twenty-first century.



◀ Chinese immigrant laborers working on the railroad, ca. 1910.

Filipino Immigration

The United States has a longstanding relationship with the Philippines, as well as a protracted migration history. This helps explain why this relatively small (with a population of 88 million, compared to China and India's billion-plus people) and quite distant country sends large numbers of its nationals to the United States. The Philippines was a U.S. colony from 1898 until 1946. From 1898 to 1934, Filipinos were American nationals and could freely come to the United States. Many were recruited as laborers by Hawaiian sugar plantations, and by 1931, around 113,000 had migrated to Hawaii alone. Manufacturers and vineyard owners in California also recruited Filipinos as workers, attracting over 5,000 to the mainland by 1920. With the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act, which ended the flow of Japanese laborers, agribusiness turned to Mexican and Filipino labor, such that by 1930, there were 56,000 Filipinos on the West Coast. As the numbers of Filipinos began to increase in the 1920s, whites increasingly began to see Filipinos as a problem and a threat. In 1929, the California legislature asked Congress to restrict Filipino immigration. Congress eventually responded by passing the Tydings-McDuffe Act in 1934, which limited Filipino immigration to an annual quota of fifty—the smallest of any country. The onset of World War II and racial violence on the West Coast also contributed to slowing Filipino immigration. Between 1946 and 1965,

33,000 Filipinos immigrated to the United States, nearly half of whom were wives of U.S. servicemen (Liu, Ong, and Rosenstein 1991; White, Biddlecom, and Guo 1993; Ngai 2004).

As with other countries, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act changed immigration patterns from the Philippines to the United States. Between 1965 and 1985, about 667,000 Filipinos obtained visas to come to the United States. These Filipino migrants consisted of two groups of people. The first group, which constituted about two-thirds of Filipino immigrants, came on family reunification visas from the networks of the pre-1965 migrants. The second included migrants who obtained employment visas, mostly as professionals and other highly trained individuals (Liu, Ong, and Rosenstein 1991). In 2015, 5 percent of all new legal permanent residents were from the Philippines, making it the fourth-largest sending country (Baugh and Wistman 2017).

Indian Immigration

India is another country that sent large numbers of immigrants to the United States prior to passage of the Johnson-Reed Act. As with other Asian countries, immigration from India resumed after 1965. Between 1966 and 1981, 215,640 Asian Indians came to the United States. This rate of 14,376 immigrants per year is twenty times higher than the rate at the previous peak in the period just before World War I. The majority of these new immigrants were professionals, with less than 1 percent working in farm labor occupations (Gonzales 1986). In 2015, India was the third-largest sending country for legal permanent residents, as 64,116 Indians became legal permanent residents that year (Baugh and Wistman 2017).

Korean Immigration

The pattern is similar for Korea. Over 7,000 Koreans migrated to Hawaii to work on sugar plantations between 1903 and 1905. Korean migration was cut off, first as a result of restrictions placed on emigration by the Japanese imperial power and later by the 1924 restrictions. These restrictions were lifted in the aftermath of the Korean War (1950–1953), and more than 3,000 Koreans were admitted between 1950 and 1965, the vast majority of whom were wives of U.S. servicemen stationed in Korea. With passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, Koreans quickly became one of the largest immigrant groups in the United States. In 1965, 2,165 Koreans entered the United States. In 1970, 9,314 came. And in 1977, 30,917 entered (Reimers 1981; Min 1990). Between 1975 and 1990, Korea sent more immigrants to the United States than any other country, with the exception of Mexico and the Philippines. Korean immigrants were relatively highly educated, and 30 percent in the 1970s came

on skills-based visas. The remaining 70 percent came on family reunification visas (Min 1990).

Vietnamese Immigration

Vietnam is distinct from the other Asian countries in that there were almost no Vietnamese in the United States in the early twentieth century, or even prior to the Vietnam War. Today, however, there are over one million Vietnamese in the United States. The first wave came as refugees; between 1971 and 1980, 150,000 Vietnamese were admitted to the United States (White, Biddlecom, and Guo 1993). The reunification provisions of the 1965 act led to the growth of the Vietnamese population in the United States well after the Vietnam War ended (Kelly 1986). Those Vietnamese who were in the United States already had the right to bring their family members to the country under the family reunification provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Legal immigration through family reunification policies, combined with illegal immigration, led to the continued growth of the Vietnamese population. The 2000 census reported the presence of over one million Vietnamese, nearly a quarter of whom had been born in the United States (Hoefer, Rytina, and Campbell 2007). In 2010, Vietnam came in at number nine in the list of the top twenty countries sending legal permanent residents to the United States, with 310,000 Vietnamese legal permanent residents in the country (Rytina 2011). Three other countries in Asia had larger populations of legal permanent residents in the United States: the Philippines (560,000), China (550,000), and India (500,000).

Figure 13-4 shows the distribution of the population of undocumented immigrants in the United States in 2013: 56 percent of undocumented migrants in the United States come from Mexico, 15 percent from Central America, and 14 percent from Asia.

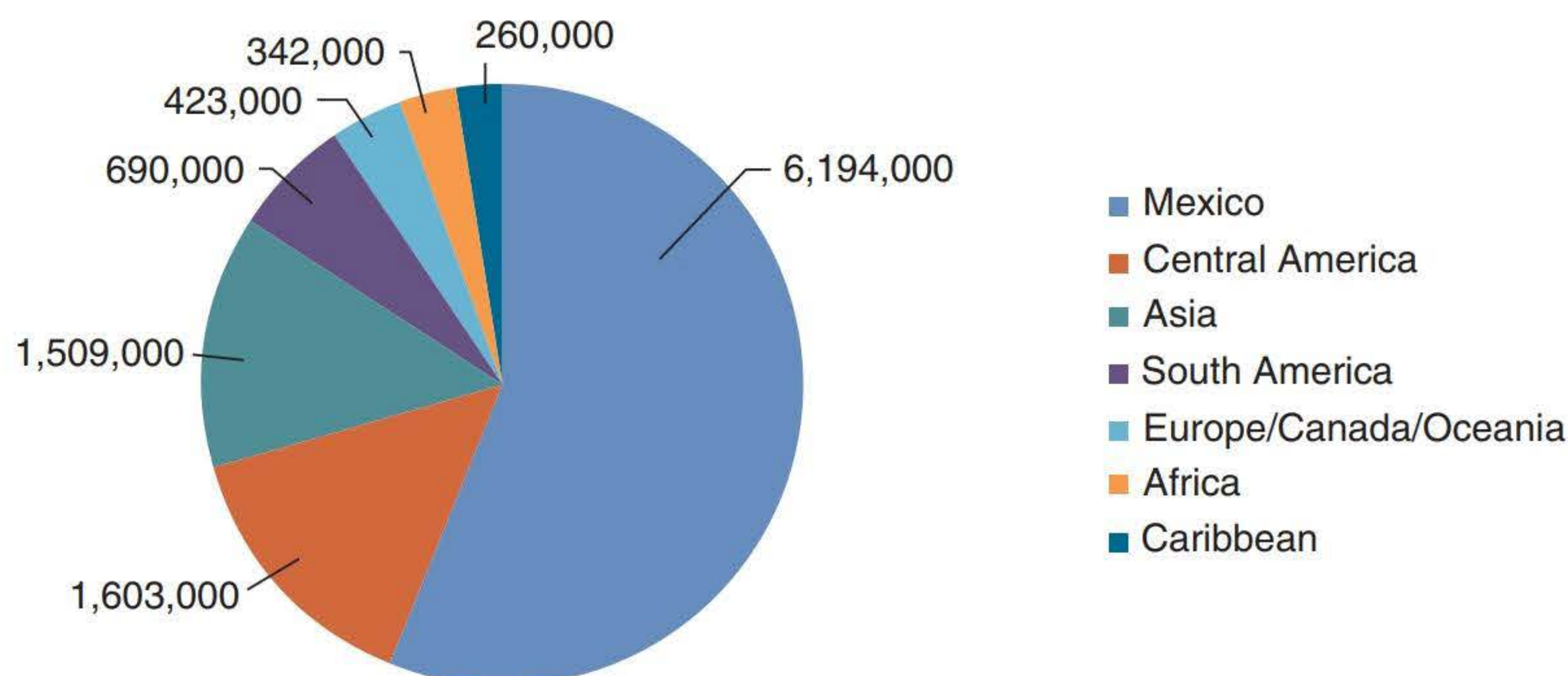


FIGURE 13-4.
Region of Birth
of Undocumented
Immigrants Residing in
the United States, 2013

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Migration Policy Institute (2015).

Latin American and Caribbean Immigration

There were very few immigrants from Latin America or the Caribbean in the United States prior to the twentieth century, and those who did come were mostly from Mexico. Latin American migration increased dramatically in the 1990s, when 5 million Latin Americans became legal permanent residents (DHS, Office of Immigration Statistics 2016). This surge was largely due to a piece of legislation called the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which permitted the legalization of millions of immigrants. Figure 13-5 shows the number of people from the Americas who have obtained legal permanent resident status since 1820. In recent years, the number of new legal permanent residents from the Americas has decreased. In 2015, fewer people from the Americas (366,126) attained legal permanent residency than from Asia (419,297) (Baugh and Wistman 2017).

Latin American Immigration

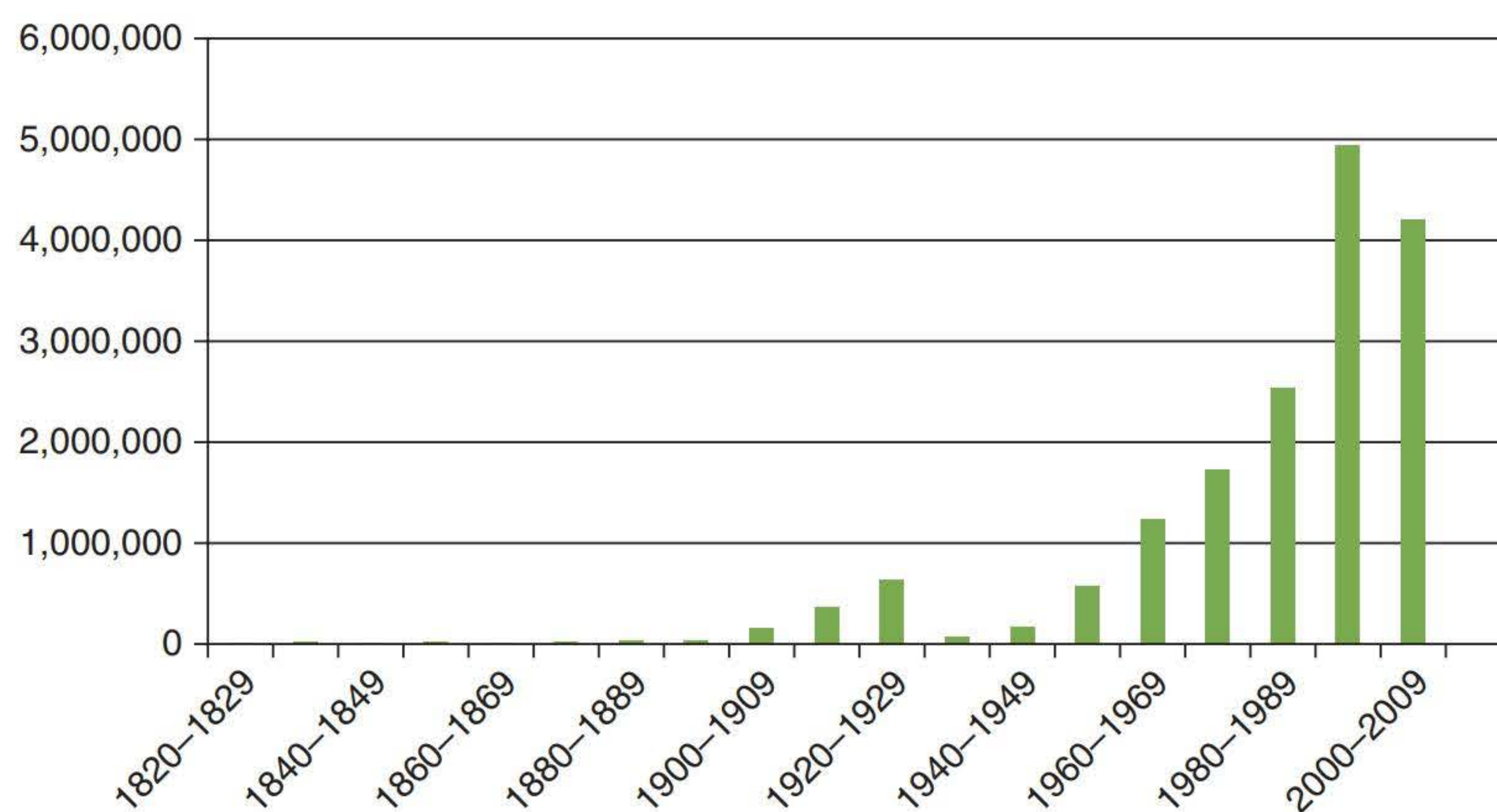
The vast majority of Latin American migrants have come from Mexico. However, substantial numbers of Central American and South American immigrants began to enter the country beginning in the 1980s.

Up until the 1970s, over 80 percent of Mexicans who came to the United States were temporary farm workers. By 1997, only 40 percent of Mexicans could be described as such (Massey et al. 2002). With passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act and the subsequent 1986 mass legalization laws, increasing numbers of Mexicans have chosen to reside permanently in the United States.

Central Americans have been coming to the United States since the late nineteenth century, but they did not begin to arrive in large numbers until

FIGURE 13-5.
Persons from the
Americas Attaining Legal
Permanent Resident
Status, 1820–2009

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics (2015).



the 1960s, with passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. Around 8,000 Central Americans entered the United States legally between 1900 and 1910; this number increased to 17,000 in the next decade, around 6,000 in the 1930s, 21,000 in the 1940s, and about 45,000 in the 1950s. In the 1960s, the presence of U.S. companies in Central America increased, with a concomitant increase in the presence of Central Americans in the United States. Between 1971 and 1980, more than 130,000 Central Americans legally entered the United States (Hamilton and Chinchilla 1991).

In the 1980s, immigration to the United States from El Salvador and other Central American countries increased rapidly as a result of both political violence in Central America and the economic setbacks that this violence entailed (Hamilton and Chinchilla 1991). In neighboring Nicaragua, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency financed and organized a counterrevolution against the Sandinista government. In El Salvador, the U.S. government supplied military equipment to the government in the 1980s, which was used to kill thousands of civilians (Hamilton and Chinchilla 1991). As part of its Cold War strategy, the U.S. government also supplied the Salvadoran government with more than \$6 billion in military and economic aid between 1980 and 1992 (Quan 2005). The civil war in El Salvador caused massive population displacements, and many of those displaced came to the United States. While the conditions in El Salvador were the motivation for leaving, the nation's longstanding ties to the United States turned the latter country into a preferred destination when Salvadorans began to seek refuge (Menjívar 2000).

Caribbean Immigration

Immigrants have been coming to the United States from the Caribbean as long as the nation has been keeping records. Between 1820 and 1900, nearly 90,000 people from the Caribbean came to the United States. Immigration from this region first reached a peak in the first three decades of the twentieth century, when 300,000 people from the Caribbean became legal permanent residents. In the last three decades of the twentieth century, 2.5 million people from the Caribbean became legal permanent residents of the United States. Another million migrated legally in the first decade of the twenty-first century (Golash-Boza 2012). Since the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, large numbers of immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Jamaica have entered the country.

The United States has been heavily involved in the affairs of the Dominican Republic and has been the destination of many immigrants as a consequence of this close relationship. Between 1961 and 1968, for example, the United

> Following the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, more people from the Dominican Republic entered the United States than from any other country in the Western Hemisphere except Mexico.



States was closely entangled in the Dominican Republic's presidential elections, to the point of ensuring that the democratically elected left-wing president Juan Bosch was ousted in 1965. This time of intense involvement in the Dominican Republic coincided with the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which paved the way for Dominicans to enter the United States. During this time, more people from the Dominican Republic entered the United States than from any other country in the Western Hemisphere except Mexico. Emigration from the Dominican Republic has continued to rise. By 1980, there were 169,000 Dominican immigrants in the United States. By 1990, there were 348,000, and by 2012, there were nearly a million (Garrison and Weiss 1979; Hernández 2004; Nwosu and Batalova 2014).

Cuba is another Caribbean country that has had a longstanding relationship with the United States. In the early twentieth century, more than 20,000 Cubans lived in the United States, and by the end of the 1950s, that number was about 50,000. This population continued to increase following the 1959 victory of Fidel Castro in the Cuban Revolution. By the end of the 1980s, there were nearly one million Cubans in the United States (Perez 2003). The exiles who came in the early 1960s came because of a long history of U.S. military interventions into Cuba, with the expectation that the U.S. government would assist in ousting Castro's government. Those migrants who come today come

more often for economic than political motives, and because of ties they have in the United States, in the context of an immigration policy that has been generally favorable toward Cubans. President Lyndon B. Johnson established an “open door” policy that encouraged Cuban emigration. In the mid-1990s, President Bill Clinton changed that policy to a “wet foot, dry foot” policy that repatriated Cubans found at sea but allowed those who reached land to stay. In his last days in office in January 2017, President Obama ended this policy, thereby ending Cuban migrants’ special treatment (Eckstein and Barberia 2002; Perez 2003; Pew Hispanic Center 2006).

Relatively few Jamaicans came to the United States prior to 1965, in part because Jamaicans were primarily emigrating elsewhere: to Central America, other islands, and Great Britain. However, just as Great Britain passed a series of restrictive immigration laws in the 1960s, the United States passed the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which facilitated the increased immigration of Jamaicans on skills- and family-based visas. By 2009, there were about 637,000 Jamaican migrants in the United States (Glennie and Chappell 2010). Nearly half of Jamaicans in the United States live in New York City, and another 28 percent live in southern Florida. There are also significant populations in Connecticut, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and Atlanta (Vickerman 1999). Notably, over half of Jamaican migrants to the United States are women (Foner 2008; Glennie and Chappell 2010).

Migrants to the United States from Puerto Rico are not technically immigrants, as Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens. Nevertheless, Puerto Ricans share a similar migration history with other Caribbean countries, in terms of its relationship to the U.S. mainland. Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the United States in 1898, and the island became a U.S. territory. In 1917, Puerto Ricans became citizens of the United States. Shortly thereafter, employers in the United States began to recruit Puerto Ricans to work in the mainland United States due to labor shortages caused by World War I. The recruitment of Puerto Ricans—and thus the migration—intensified in the aftermath of World War II when labor shortages in the mainland United States were even more severe. Just as Mexicans filled key labor needs in the western and southwestern United States during this time, Puerto Ricans were the primary source of migrant labor in the northeastern United States in the aftermath of World War II. The post-World War II period of massive migration of Puerto Ricans to the northeastern United States is often referred to as the “Great Migration” owing to the large numbers of Puerto Ricans who left the island. This migration tapered off in the late 1960s and 1970s, as migrants from other Caribbean countries were able to more easily migrate to the United States following the passage of the

1965 Immigration Act (Portes and Grosfoguel 1994). There has been a resurgence of migration from Puerto Rico to the mainland United States in recent years, related to a protracted economic crisis on the island. Between 2010 and 2013, an average of 48,000 Puerto Ricans left the island each year, which is over three times the average number that left each year in the 1980s and 1990s. By 2012, about 1.4 million Puerto Ricans were living on the mainland (Cohn, Patten, and Lopez 2014).

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND POLICY RESPONSE

The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act instituted quotas of 20,000 immigrants per country. At first glance, this blanket quota may seem fair. However, most of the 180-plus countries in the world do not send 20,000 immigrants per year to the United States, and a handful of countries send many more. Mexico is a case in point. Prior to 1965, there were no limits on the number of immigrants who could be admitted from Mexico, and tens of thousands of Mexicans came to the United States each year. The 1965 act initially established a ceiling of 120,000 immigrant visas for the entire Western Hemisphere. In 1976, the law came fully into effect, and a quota of 20,000 immigrants per year was extended to all countries in the Western Hemisphere, including Mexico (Joppke 1998). However, the imposition of a quota did not end large-scale migration from Mexico because, in the 1970s, many employers depended on Mexican labor to thrive, and many Mexicans desired to work in the United States.

The imbalance between the number of Mexicans allowed to enter the United States legally and the need for Mexican labor to sustain economic growth in the United States led to increased undocumented immigration, which was relatively easy at the time because there were hardly any Border Patrol agents (Massey et al. 2002). In the 1970s, undocumented immigration reached unprecedented levels and became a matter of public debate for the first time. During the 1980s, public opposition to undocumented immigration grew, and politicians began to get tough on immigration. Eventually, another major legislative change took place in 1986.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) and Nativism

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is hard to imagine that there was ever a time when illegal immigration was not seen as a problem. Remarkably, this issue did not figure on the national agenda until the 1980s, when

the tightening economy, combined with the arrival of increasing numbers of Latin Americans, generated waves of nativism and anti-immigrant sentiment. The concern over large numbers of undocumented migrants often had a racial tenor: the debates made it clear that the “problem” with immigration was the high and increasing numbers of Mexicans in the United States (Inda 2006).

The debates leading up to passage of the **Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA)** invoked racialized sentiments about Mexicans taking jobs from Americans, overusing welfare, and refusing to assimilate, despite evidence to the contrary. As Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) argues, the debates surrounding IRCA were not so much about the presence of Mexicans as about the reality that increasing numbers of Mexicans were settling in the United States. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) contends that the nativism pervading the debates over IRCA focused on three claims: (1) allegations that immigrants were stealing jobs from Americans, (2) concerns that immigrants were overusing the welfare system, and (3) worries that the newcomers were too different and “unassimilable.” By the end of the twentieth century, immigration restrictionists were no longer concerned about the inability of southern and eastern Europeans to assimilate. Now, the target was Mexicans.

The passage of IRCA involved a series of compromises and constituted the last mass legalization of the twentieth century. As the name implies, IRCA included immigration reform and control provisions. The twin prongs of IRCA were (1) to offer a legalization option for people who lived in the United States but did not have the proper authorization to work in the country and (2) to impose sanctions on employers who hired people not authorized to work in the United States. The imposition of sanctions was meant to deter employers from hiring undocumented workers. Instead, these sanctions ultimately created an industry that produced fraudulent documentation, making it easy for anyone to obtain the (false) documents they needed to work (Fragomen and Bell 2007).

One of the major consequences of IRCA was to encourage the permanent settlement of Mexican immigrants, who had formerly come primarily as temporary workers. Until the 1970s, over 80 percent of Mexican immigrants were temporary workers who came to the United States to work in the agricultural sector for a few months and then returned to Mexico with their savings. By 1997, only 40 percent of Mexican migration was for temporary work in the agricultural sector (Avila, Fuentes, and Tuirán 2000). The legalization of temporary workers encouraged more migrants to settle permanently in the United States and to bring their families with them (Massey et al. 2002). Once migrants obtained legal residence or citizenship, they were able to bring over

1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)

A series of immigration provisions that (1) offered a legalization option for undocumented workers living in the United States and (2) imposed sanctions on employers who hired undocumented workers.

family members under family reunification provisions. As increasing numbers of Mexicans settled permanently in the United States, racialized fears of immigrants intensified.

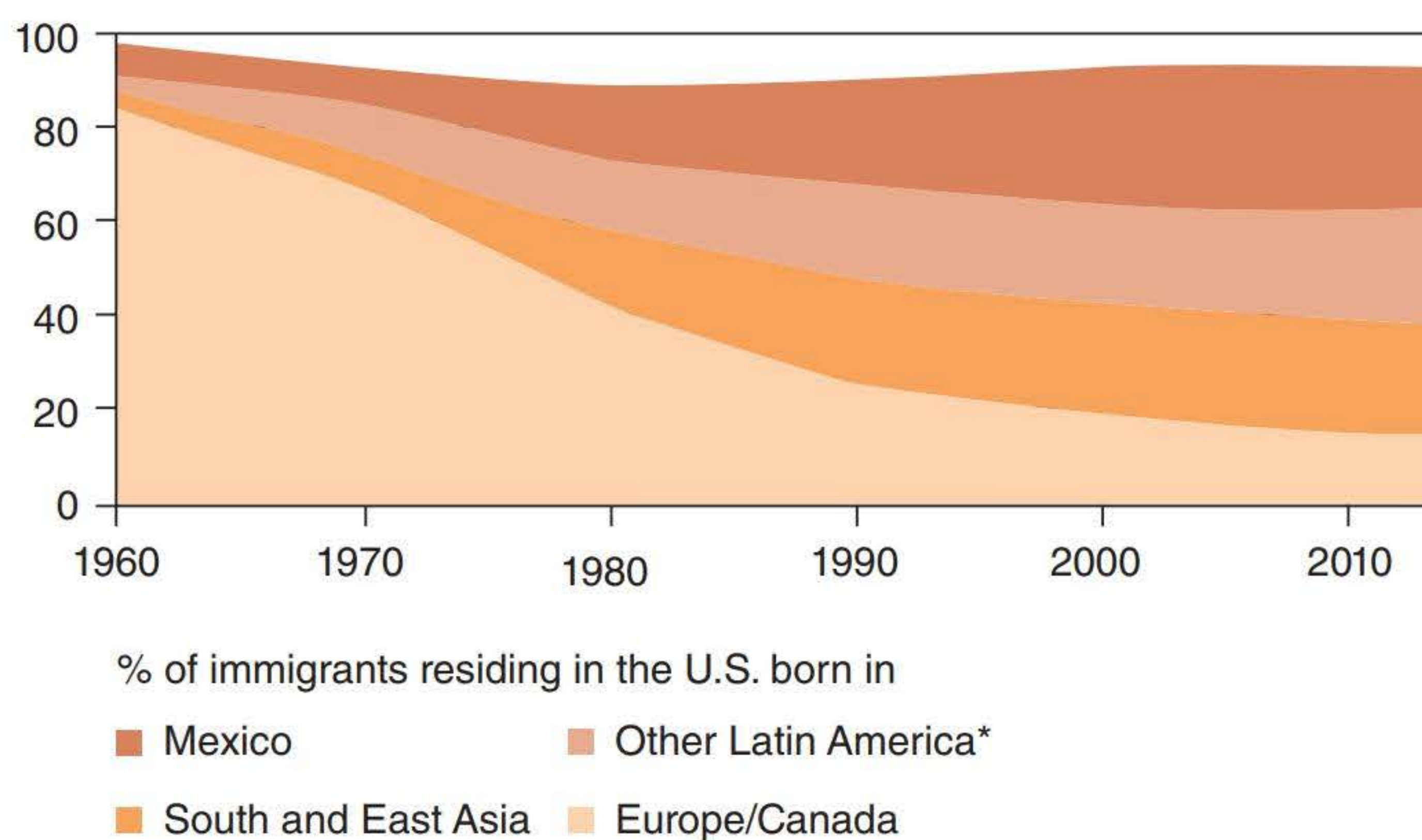
Proposition 187 and the Lead-Up to IIRIRA

Fear of immigrants often has racial undertones. The vast majority of immigrants to the United States are people of color (Figure 13-6). According to Office of Immigration Statistics data, in 2015, one million people became legal permanent residents. Just over 10 percent were from primarily white countries: 90,789 of them were from Europe, 3,795 from Australia, 978 from New Zealand, and 19,309 from Canada. Thus, any discourse about immigration today has the subtext of minority incorporation into society (Johnson 2004). The racialization of immigrants, and especially of undocumented immigrants, became clear in the campaign to push forward Proposition 187 in California, a ballot initiative that would deny social services and educational opportunities to the undocumented.

When Proposition 187 was being debated in the early 1990s, California was on the verge of becoming a majority-minority state, and demographic changes were at the center of the fears expressed by Proposition 187 supporters. For example, in Robin Dale Jacobson's interviews with supporters, one of her respondents told her that the proposition was a response to the "Mexican impact on the state of California." Another interviewee was more forthright: "So, I just wanted something to be done about too many Mexican people all of a sudden" (Jacobson 2008, 39). These fears about the increase in the Mexican

FIGURE 13.6.
**U.S. Immigrant Population
by Origin**

Source: Migration Policy Institute
(2016).



*Includes the Caribbean and Central/South America

population were exacerbated by the conflation of Mexicans with “illegals” and “criminals.” Supporters of the proposition often took the fact that undocumented migrants had crossed the border illegally or overstayed their visas to indicate that they were prone to criminal activity more generally. Governor Pete Wilson fanned the flames of this fire by “widely publicizing the estimated costs of keeping illegal aliens in prison” (Jacobson 2008, 55). In addition to criminalizing undocumented immigrants, much of the discourse surrounding Proposition 187 racialized undocumented immigrants as Mexican. Thus, many of its supporters interpreted the “invasion” of undocumented workers as a racial takeover of California (Jacobson 2008, 117).

The political campaigns that promoted the passage of Proposition 187 drew on racial imagery. Television ads supported by Governor Wilson “showed shadowy Mexicans crossing the border in large numbers” (Johnson 2004, 43). Kevin Johnson (2004) argues that the Proposition 187 campaign was a clear manifestation of the racial fears of white Californians. While it would have been politically unsavory to launch an overtly racist attack on people of color, targeting undocumented immigrants without mentioning race directly was permissible.

In the context of an economic downturn, job losses, and state cutbacks in social services, many Californians found undocumented immigrants to be appropriate scapegoats for their economic troubles, and in 1994, Proposition 187 was passed (Alvarez and Butterfield 2000). Although there was no clear connection between the presence of a large undocumented population and the hard economic times, gubernatorial and state legislature candidates in California were able to use the presence of undocumented people to their advantage by advocating for harsh policies that were not guaranteed to improve the fiscal health of the state. Politicians used undocumented immigrants as scapegoats by blaming them for the poor economic conditions, and their promises to get tough on illegal immigration helped them win elections. In California, 60 percent of voters voted in favor of Proposition 187. The bill was not implemented, however, as it was found to be unconstitutional in 1997 (Diamond 1996).



▲ In 1996, members of an anti-immigration group in California protest immigration from Mexico into the United States.

Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) 1996 legislation that, among other provisions, eliminated judicial review of some deportation orders and required mandatory detention for many non-citizens.

Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) 1996 legislation under which legal permanent residents face mandatory deportation if they are convicted of “aggravated felonies.”

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) 1996 legislation that denied government services and benefits to legally present migrants.

Although Proposition 187 was found to be unconstitutional, the debates surrounding it set the stage for passage of three laws in 1996 that negatively affected immigrants: the **Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA)**, the **Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA)**, and the **Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)**.

The PRWORA was designed to “end welfare as we know it.” It also had nativist provisions that denied services to noncitizens. Contrary to popular belief, undocumented migrants have never been eligible for welfare services such as cash benefits, Medicaid, food stamps, or public housing. The root of the myth that undocumented migrants benefit from need-based programs such as food stamps is that their U.S.-citizen children are eligible for the same set of benefits as any other U.S. citizen. When PRWORA was passed, it extended the limitations on welfare benefits to legally present immigrants. Touted as a money-saving measure, PRWORA denied most benefits to legally present migrants, at least for the first five years of their stay in the United States (Tumlin and Zimmerman, 2003). Now, let’s turn to the other two laws passed in 1996.

The 1996 Laws and the Detention and Deportation of Black and Latino Immigrants

In 1996, Congress passed two laws that fundamentally changed the rights of all foreign-born people in the United States: the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA). These laws were striking in that they eliminated judicial review of some deportation orders, required mandatory detention for many noncitizens, and introduced the potential for the use of secret evidence in certain cases. Some of the most pernicious consequences of these laws are related to the deportation of legal permanent residents, commonly referred to as “green card holders.”

Under IIRIRA, legal permanent residents like Robert Bautista (whose story was featured in the Voices sidebar on p. 376) face mandatory deportation if they are convicted of “aggravated felonies.” These include crimes for which a person is sentenced to at least one year in prison, regardless of whether the sentence is served or suspended. These crimes can also be relatively minor, such as the theft of baby clothes from a department store or two counts of minor drug possession. These cases do not require judicial review—that is, people do not have the right to have a judge hear the specifics of the case or consider the ties that a person has to the United States. Furthermore, the law can be applied retroactively. This means that any legal permanent resident charged with



< Immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean are more likely to face deportation because of AEDPA and IIRIRA laws.

a crime at any time during his or her stay in the United States could be subject to deportation. For example, a person could have come to the United States legally at age two, been convicted of resisting arrest at age eighteen, and—twenty years later, after the passage of IIRIRA—be subject to deportation at age thirty-eight. Even adopted children of U.S. citizens have faced deportation under these laws, specifically in those cases in which parents failed to naturalize their children prior to age eighteen (Morawetz 2000; Master 2003). In light of the heavy policing of black and Latino neighborhoods, and of black and Latino youth in particular, immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean are more likely to face deportation because of these laws.

The 1996 laws are punitive and harsh. Moreover, they have disproportionately affected blacks and Latinos. Johnson (2004) argues that since the vast majority of immigrants who come to the United States each year are people of color, the differential treatment of noncitizens in U.S. legal practices amounts to racial discrimination. Joe Feagin (2000, 31) defines systemic racism as “a diverse assortment of racist practices; the unjustly gained economic and political power of whites; the continuing resource inequalities; and the white-racist ideologies and attitudes created to preserve white advantage and power.” He further contends that “one can accurately describe the United States as a ‘total racist society’ in which every major aspect of life is shaped to some degree by the core racist realities.” The system of deportation and detention of immigrants is no exception: it is clearly shaped by the “core racist realities” of the United States.

As described in Chapter Eleven, the criminal justice system systematically disadvantages black and Latino men. Even though black and white men have similar levels of criminal activity, black men are seven times more likely than white men to be imprisoned, and Latinos are four times as likely (Feagin 2000; P. H. Collins 2004; Western 2006). In the case of drug offenses, the data are



Hector, a Guatemalan Deportee

Hector moved to the United States with his mother when he was three years old, in 1984. They joined his father, who had been there since he was a newborn. In 1990, his parents applied for political asylum, as Hector's mother had worked for the Guatemalan government and could be subject to persecution if they returned. They were issued work permits and waited for their cases to be heard. In 1999, Hector and his family were able to legalize under the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA). Hector became a legal permanent resident of the United States.

Hector spent most of his childhood in the San Fernando Valley, where he completed elementary, middle, and high school. He did well in high school and attended the University of California. After he finished college in 2004, his first job was on campus as a coordinator for a smoking prevention and cessation program.

While working on campus, Hector also began to work part time at a computer company. When the grant funding his university job ran out, he switched over to full-time work at the computer company. There, he quickly moved up from entry- to mid-level management. Things were going well for him. He was earning good money at the company and was promoted several times.

Hector frequently traveled back to the San Fernando Valley to visit his parents and old friends. It was there he reconnected with some people who encouraged him to join them in a credit card fraud scheme. Hector and his friends were caught forging credit cards, and he was sentenced to eighteen months in prison. After finishing his time, Hector faced automatic deportation to Guatemala.

At Hector's deportation hearing, it did not matter that he had come to the United States when he was three years old, that he was a legal permanent resident, that he had a college degree, and that he had no immediate family in Guatemala. The only consideration the judge could take into account was the fact that he had been convicted of an aggravated felony. Hector was deported to Guatemala, where he had to remake his life from the ground up.

Source: Golash-Boza 2012.

particularly striking. In the United States, black men are sent to prison on drug charges at thirteen times the rate of white men, yet five times as many whites use illegal drugs as blacks (Alexander 2010). Although whites use drugs more frequently than blacks, blacks are much more likely to end up incarcerated. These data are important for understanding deportations, as about a third of all deportees are deported for drug charges, and most deportees are men (Golash-Boza 2015).

Racism in the criminal justice system has severe implications for black and Latino/a immigrants. Many Jamaicans, Dominicans, and Haitians experience the same set of resource deprivations and racist ideologies and practices that have led to the mass incarceration of black men. Immigrants from Latin America often live in Latino neighborhoods that are heavily policed. Thus, immigrants of African and Latin American descent are more likely to be jailed and eventually deported than immigrants of European or Asian descent who are not subject to the same set of prejudices and discriminatory actions. Whereas the immigrant population includes many whites and Asians, blacks and Latinos almost exclusively make up the group of detainees and deportees. Black and brown people from Latin America and the Caribbean are substantially more likely to be deported than are whites or Asians; 98 percent of deportees are sent to the Americas (see Table 13-1).

TABLE 13-1 Top Ten Countries to Which Deportees Were Sent, 2014			
	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mexico	275,911	66.57%	66.57%
Guatemala	54,153	13.07%	79.63%
Honduras	40,560	9.79%	89.42%
El Salvador	26,685	6.44%	95.86%
Dominican Republic	2,045	0.49%	96.35%
Ecuador	1,511	0.36%	96.71%
Colombia	1,309	0.32%	97.03%
Nicaragua	1,284	0.31%	97.34%
Jamaica	1,027	0.25%	97.59%
Brazil	931	0.22%	97.81%
Others	9,065	2.19%	100.00%

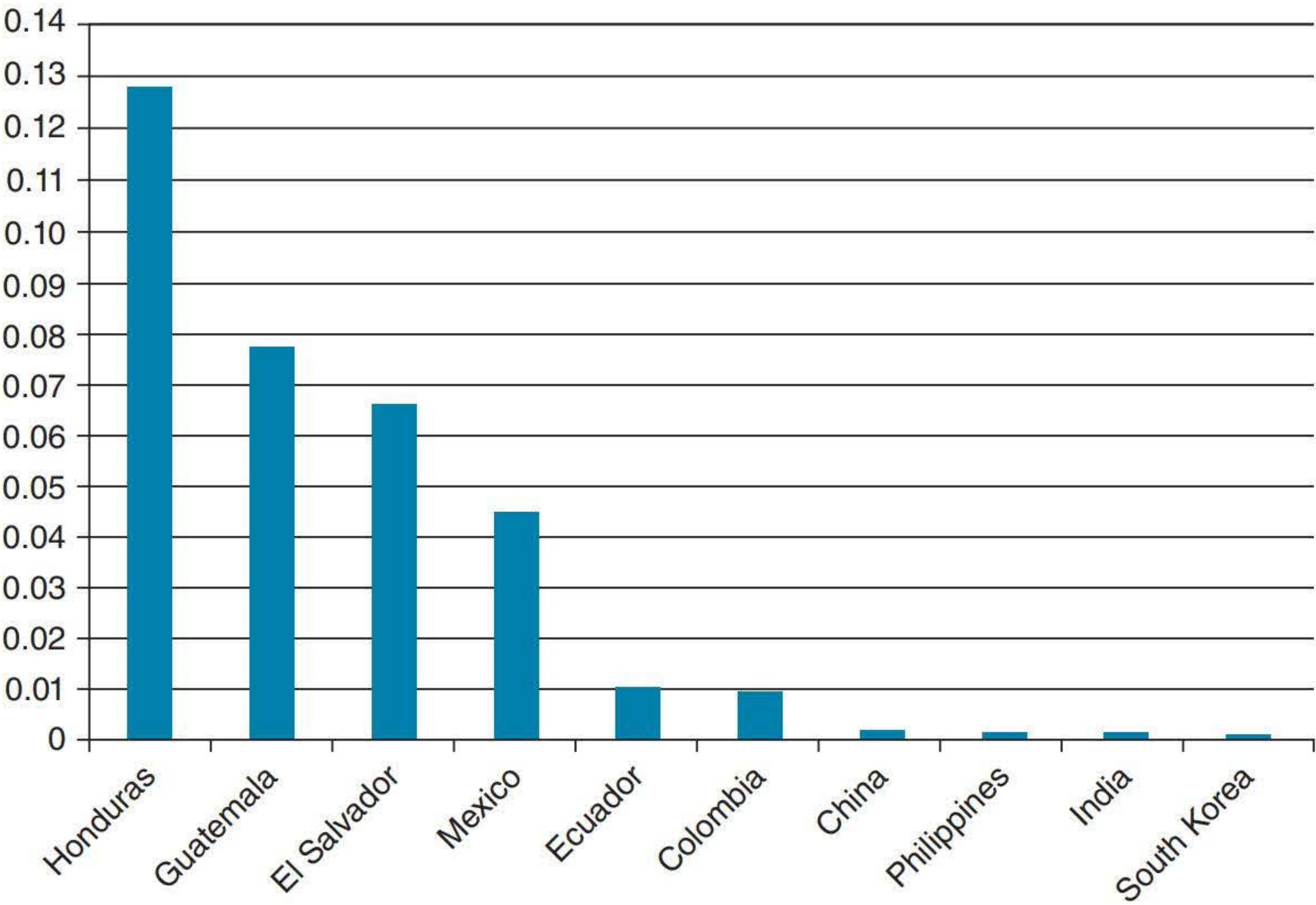
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2016.

Earlier in this chapter, we looked at the five countries of origin from which most legal permanent residents in the United States come: China, India, Mexico, the Philippines, and Vietnam. With the notable exception of Mexico, these are not the countries to which we send most deportees. The top five countries of origin of deportees in 2014 were Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic. These five countries alone accounted for over 96 percent of all people deported in 2014. Table 13-1 lists the top ten countries to which deportees were sent in 2014. These ten countries represent 97.81 percent of people deported in 2014. These data call attention to a glaring fact: Asians are prominent among immigrants overall, whereas Latin Americans and Caribbean nationals are overrepresented among deportees. At this point, it will be useful to take a closer look at the numbers. As Figure 13-7 shows, even when we take into account the relative numbers of undocumented migrants in the country, Latin Americans are still much more likely to be deported than Asians.

Deportation policy also has gendered effects. About 90 percent of all deportees are men, even though about half of all immigrants are men (Golash-Boza 2015). This disparity is due to the way criminal and immigration laws are enforced. Men are more likely than women to be in public places—driving, walking, or standing on the corner—and thus are more likely to come to the attention of the authorities. Although more men are deported than women,

FIGURE 13-7.
Ratio of Undocumented
Migrants to Deportees,
2014

Source: U.S. Department of
Homeland Security, Office of
Immigration Statistics (2016).



deportation policy does not affect only deportees—it also affects their families. When a person is deported, a family often loses a breadwinner.

Current immigration laws, practices, and policies further enhance the extent to which our society is riddled with racism and repression. The general climate of strict enforcement of immigration laws in the post–September 11 era has further exacerbated the situation. A recent nationally representative survey of Hispanics found that nearly one in ten Latinos had been stopped by authorities and asked about their immigration status, and a similar percentage had experienced discrimination in housing. Remarkably, 15 percent of all Latinos between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine said they had experienced some form of discrimination. It is thus no wonder that the majority of those Latinos surveyed said they worry about deportation (Lopez and Minushkin 2008). These numbers indicate that the racial profiling of Latinos is widespread and that Latinos are targeted in immigration enforcement efforts.

The 1996 deportation laws were punitive. Moreover, they have had a disproportionate effect on people of color. This pattern is consistent with other patterns of systemic racism in this country. The racism embedded in immigration policy is not an isolated case, but a foreseeable by-product of a society that systematically denies the dignity and humanity of people of color. The criminalization of black men leads to the deportation of a disproportionate number of Dominicans and Jamaicans. The stereotype of Mexicans, and of those who look “Mexican,” as “illegals” leads to the targeting of Mexicans and Central Americans in immigration enforcement efforts.

These practices and policies do not simply isolate and remove immigrants of color, but also have detrimental effects on their families, who are, in most cases, also people of color. Those children, spouses, and parents who witness their loved ones being mistreated and banished are also victims of this systematic denial of human rights. In light of patterns of segregation, there are whole communities of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in which children are growing up not only experiencing structural racism in terms of resource provisions, but also witnessing their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, neighbors, and community leaders being told they have no right to be here and, in many cases, being forcibly removed from their communities. Just as African American children often grow up knowing that blacks are more likely than other groups to be “locked up,” Mexicans and other Latin American and Caribbean people grow up knowing that people like them are being expelled from this country at the rate of nearly 1,000 people a day (Golash-Boza 2015).

IMMIGRATION POLICY AND NATIVISM IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

At the end of the twentieth century, the United States began to witness a surge in nativism not seen since the 1920s. Historian George Sanchez (1997) suggests that three factors distinguish contemporary racialized nativism from that of a century ago:

- The rise of extreme antipathy toward languages other than English. This feeling is exemplified in a campaign against having to “press 1 for English” and in local efforts to keep libraries from purchasing foreign-language books.
- The concern that Asian, Caribbean, and Latin American immigrants are taking advantage of affirmative action programs designed to help native-born minorities, especially African Americans. This concern can be seen in conversations regarding the high numbers of West Indians entering Ivy League schools.
- The worry that immigrants are draining public resources through the use of welfare, education, and health care services. This sentiment persists even though laws passed in 1996 severely limit immigrants’ access to welfare and health services. The Supreme Court decided in *Plyer v. Doe* in 1982 that any child in the United States has the right to an education. Yet nativists see the education of immigrant children as a burden rather than an investment in the future.

The rise of nativism in the United States is closely tied to economic uncertainties. Nativism in the 1920s was connected to the country’s difficult transition from a primarily agricultural economy to a massively industrialized one. At the end of the twentieth century, the United States experienced rapid deindustrialization and the rise of a service-oriented economy. These structural changes in the economy produced economic uncertainty, especially among the working class and poor. Moreover, as native-born blacks, whites, and Latinos/as have been displaced from factory jobs, immigrants have come in to fill jobs in the service sector. As the economy has shifted, native-born workers have not always been able to retool their skill sets or displace themselves to areas of high growth. The widespread perception that immigrants are “taking our jobs” is intimately tied to the rise of nativism.

During Donald Trump’s presidential campaign, he played into these fears using nativist and racist language, running his campaign on an anti-immigrant

and anti-Muslim platform. He made calls to ban all Muslims from the United States. He referred to Mexicans as “rapists” and emphasized the importance of keeping out “bad hombres.” Moreover, he made specific promises to revoke the rights of immigrants. Trump’s rallying cry to “build a wall” played into his constituents’ racialized fears related to economic and demographic changes in the United States.

Donald Trump did not invent these discourses, but he did tap into them. Despite President Obama’s record-high deportations, many people in the United States argued that he was not doing enough to fix what they viewed as the immigration “problem.” But Obama also issued an executive order—Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)—which granted reprieve from deportation and a work permit to qualified immigrants who arrived to the United States as minors.

During the Obama presidency, many states passed their own restrictive laws targeting immigrants. The first major state law was Arizona’s Senate Bill (SB) 1070, the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act. This law was followed closely by Alabama’s 2011 House Bill (HB) 56, the Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act; and by Georgia’s HB 87, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act of 2011. Many of these laws have backfired: when Alabama passed laws restricting the rights of undocumented people, the state experienced a massive outflow of immigrants. These immigrants left jobs behind that went unfilled, as immigrants in Alabama who picked tomatoes for a living could not easily be replaced by the urban unemployed. Native-born workers are unlikely to see the benefit of moving from the city to the countryside to pick tomatoes. The idea that Alabama could simply rid itself of undocumented workers and thereby fix its unemployment problem was ill conceived and riddled with nativist logic.

When Arizona SB 1070 went into effect in July 2010, it sparked national debate, protests, and boycotts. The law required local law enforcement agents to determine the immigration status of any person with whom they interacted during the course of their duties. This meant, for example, that if a police officer responded to a call for domestic violence, he would be required to check the immigration status of both the perpetrator and the victim, if he had reason to believe that either might be in the country unlawfully. SB 1070 was subsequently modified with the enactment of HB 2162 on April 30, 2010, which changed the language such that police officers would only be required to check the immigration status of people during a lawful stop, detention, or arrest. With these modified provisions, SB 1070 only required intervention in those

cases in which a person was suspected of violating state laws. These modifications relieved some concerns that the law would make victims of crimes less likely to contact law enforcement officials, yet the possibility of racial profiling remained a substantial problem. According to an amicus brief filed by the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) (2010, 5), “there is simply no unbiased means of implementing the term ‘unlawful presence,’ because as a legal status there are no observable characteristics of ‘unlawful presence,’ or readily available means by which a police officer could discern ‘unlawful presence’ in any stop, detention, or investigative encounter.” In 2012, a Supreme Court decision blocked three provisions of the Arizona law, but it upheld the provision that required officers to demand papers from individuals. However, in 2016, the National Immigration Law Center and other immigrants’ rights groups won a lawsuit against the state of Arizona. As a result, officers are no longer required to ask for papers during stops, although they may do so at their own discretion.

The nativist restrictions in immigration law sometimes also manifest as Islamophobia (discussed in Chapter Four). One example is the “Muslim ban.” In January 2017, shortly after taking office, Trump signed an Executive Order called *Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*, temporarily banning the admission of people from seven majority-Muslim countries: Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. The ban was implemented as flights from these countries were in midair, which caused chaos and widespread panic. An outcry on social media followed, and thousands flocked to airports to protest the ban. There was also resistance in the courts: several states and individual plaintiffs sued the federal government on the grounds that the ban was not constitutional. In February 2017, a district judge in Washington State suspended the ban nationwide with a temporary restraining order. Six days later, a district appeals court upheld that ruling. In May 2017, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 10 to 3 against Trump’s travel ban, reaffirming the lower court’s decision.

The underlying motive for the president’s desire to ban the admission of people from these seven countries is Islamophobia, which manifests here as the fear that people from Muslim countries are the most likely to commit acts of terrorism against the United States. This fear is unfounded. The sum total of people killed by nationals from those seven countries between 1975 and 2015 is zero (Nowrasteh 2017). The Muslim ban would not make America any safer, but it would have harmful effects on the lives of many people, as the Voices story of the Zarour family shows.

The Zarour Family

The scent of black tea and rice wafts through the bare apartment the Zarour family has come to call home after fleeing Syria.

It's been three months since they arrived in El Cajon, [California,] home to the second-largest Iraqi diaspora in the United States. . . . Starting a new life has been difficult, she says, but it is better than the alternative they escaped four years ago: the crack of strafing fire from government or rebel troops in what was once the city of Homs, and explosions that left only gaping craters or rubble where bustling urban life once hummed. . . .

Zarour, her husband, and her five children are among the nearly 800 Syrian refugees who arrived in San Diego County last year and settled in El Cajon. California led the nation in resettlement of Syrian refugees in fiscal 2016, taking in 1,450 immigrants, according to the Pew Research Center. . . . Here, grocery store signs are in English and Arabic. Posters advertise realty and investment services in both languages, alongside signs for concerts headlined by Arab pop stars.

At the downtown El Cajon farmers market, resettlement agencies set up booths to explain their services and hand out ACLU pamphlets about the right to wear a hijab. Iraqi vendors work one table over, selling cilantro, turnips and herbs from a community garden maintained by immigrants and refugees. A sign hanging from their tent in Arabic asks shoppers not to haggle over vegetable prices. . . .

The stress of starting anew has been amplified in recent weeks by President Trump's executive order that placed a 120-day ban on all refugee admissions and an indefinite suspension of admission for Syrian refugees.

The travel ban is on pause after a federal judge in Seattle issued a temporary restraining order, but Zarour's husband, Ahmad, who still has family in Jordan and Syria, wonders whether the order will affect them.

"Why does he view us as terrorists? We are people looking to start a new life," he says of Trump. "We aren't like that. We are Muslims, but we are very kind." . . .

Two years after the Syrian civil war began, Zarour abandoned his small supermarket in Homs and gave up his work molding custom ceilings. The family settled in Damascus before it too became too dangerous. They fled to Zaatari refugee camp, a squalid but sprawling outpost near the Jordanian-Syrian border. They spent 20 days in the camp before they moved to another town. . . .

Voices.

(continued)



Continued

Early in their stay in Jordan, they registered as refugees with the United Nations. Eventually, after two years of interviews, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees referred them for resettlement in the United States. . . .

Adjusting to a new life in America has bruised the pride of a man accustomed to providing for his family.

He struggles to learn the skills taught in workshops mandated by resettlement agencies—basics such as learning English, navigating public transportation or how to open a bank account. Attending those classes is tied to the financial aid the family receives.

To fit all seven people in their small two-bedroom apartment, the five children sleep wall-to-wall in the master bedroom. He and his wife sleep in the spare room.

The three couches in his living room were donated.

Before the war in Syria, he had a home of his own, lived near his siblings, and held a government job that helped him pay the bills. As he places a glass of tea on the cardboard box he now uses as a coffee table, Zarour wonders if he will ever find a piece of the happiness he once knew.

Source: Parvini 2017.

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CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

How far have we come since 1882, the year the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed? The immigration laws enacted since 1965 in the United States do not have overt racial provisions like the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act or the 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act. We also have not seen anything as egregious as the 1954 Operation Wetback. Laws with these names would be untenable in the twenty-first-century United States. Nevertheless, we continue to see both the racially uneven consequences of immigration laws and racialized sentiments directed at particular national-origin and racial groups.

This chapter has shown that U.S. immigration policy has been racialized from the beginning. At the same time, the way these policies have been racialized has changed over time, as racial ideologies have shifted. Throughout history, nativism has also consistently reared its head, although in different ways over time.

Harvard professor Aristide Zolberg titled his 2009 book on immigration policy *A Nation by Design*, hinting at the ways that immigration policy has been deployed with the goal of creating an ideal populace. In 1882, the

Chinese Exclusion Act was passed to end the influx of Chinese laborers. The 1924 Immigration Act was designed to recruit immigrants from northern and western Europe and to exclude immigrants from the rest of the world. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act was passed in the name of civil rights and ostensibly to create a diverse society, yet ended up creating a large undocumented Mexican population. The 1986 laws were passed with the hope of ending immigration. When that did not work, the 1996 laws made life more difficult and precarious for immigrants. The current state laws are designed with the hope that immigrants will self-deport. The push toward changing immigration laws at the national level is driven in large part by a desire to limit the number of nonwhite immigrants allowed to enter the United States. As the number of nonwhite immigrants has grown since 1965, we have seen increasingly harsh and restrictive immigration laws and proposals.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

nativism 378	1965 Immigration and Nationality Act 384	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) 398
Oriental Exclusion Act 381	1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) 395	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) 398
legal permanent resident 382	Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) 398	
bracero program 383		
Operation Wetback 384		
McCarran Internal Security Act 384		

13.1 How does the history of U.S. immigration policy reflect racism and nativism? (pp. 378–394)

- Nativism and racism have been intertwined in U.S. immigration policies since the beginning of the nation’s history.
- The first piece of immigration legislation was the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. Laws continued to be racialized over the course of the twentieth century.

Review

- » What is the significance of the Chinese Exclusion Act and the court cases that stemmed from it?
- » Why was Operation Wetback important?

Critical Thinking

- » How has immigration changed the United States?
- » How have economic circumstances played a role in the passage of immigration laws?
- » How did U.S. colonial and imperial relationships with other countries affect migration flows?

13.2 How has U.S. policy responded to undocumented immigration? (pp. 394–403)

- Prior to 1965, there were no numerical restrictions on Mexican immigration.
- Passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act and the subsequent 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act created the problem of illegal immigration. Since then, more restrictive laws have been passed.

Review

- » What were some major changes brought about by the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act?
- » What legislative changes sparked Asian and Latin American immigration in the late twentieth century?
- » What restrictive immigration laws were passed in the late twentieth century?

Critical Thinking

- » Are IRCA and IIRIRA related to racialized sentiments? How so?

13.3 What is the relationship between nativism and racism in the twenty-first century? (pp. 404–408)

- The 1996 laws were restrictive and have led to the deportation of thousands of immigrants—mostly black and Latino men.

Review

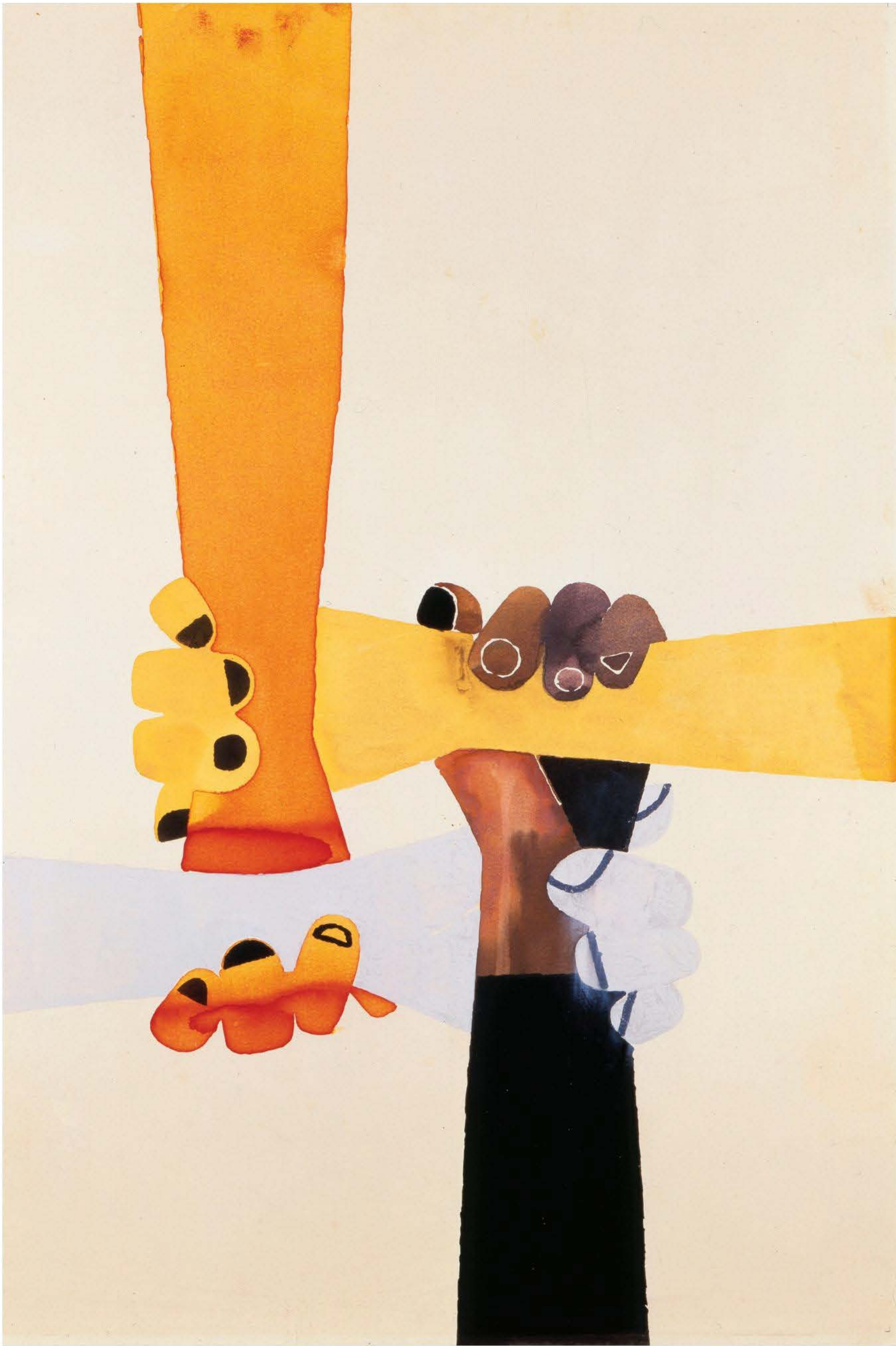
- » How does contemporary nativism differ from that of previous historical periods?

Critical Thinking

- » Why are Latin American immigrants the most likely to be deported?

Talking about Race

There are no statutes of limitations for illegal entry (laws specifying how long after events a case may begin), as there are for most other crimes. The next time you hear someone say something such as “what part of illegal don’t you understand?” try bringing up statutes of limitations. For example, you could explain that a person who shoplifted in 2010 wouldn’t be brought to trial for it in 2018, yet an immigrant can be deported for illegal entry even decades after the original offense. Use this as an entry point for broader discussions of illegal immigration.



“Civilization is a method of living, an attitude of equal respect of all men,”—Jane Addams, Speech, Honolulu, 1933.
From the series Great Ideas of Western Man. George Giusti. 1955. India ink and gouache on paper, 24-7/8 x 18-5/16 in.
(*Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC/Art Resource, NY*)

Racial Justice in the United States Today

As You Read

- 14.1 What does racial justice look like?
- 14.2 How can we achieve racial justice?
- 14.3 What is the connection between racial justice and empathy?
- 14.4 Why is a singular focus on racism insufficient to achieve racial justice?

Chapter Outline

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On the fiftieth anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington, civil rights lawyer, author, and activist Michelle Alexander posted the following update on her public Facebook page. Her comments provide a great starting point for a conversation about racial justice, the limits of civil rights, and the connections between mass incarceration and other forms of exclusion here and abroad. Her work also raises important questions about the relationship between racism and capitalism.



For the past several years, I have spent virtually all my working hours writing about or speaking about the immorality, cruelty, racism, and insanity of our nation's latest caste system: mass incarceration. On this Facebook page I have written and posted about little else. But as I pause today to reflect on the meaning and significance of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, I realize that my focus has been too narrow. Five years after the March, Dr. King was speaking out against

the Vietnam War, condemning America's militarism and imperialism—famously stating that our nation was the “greatest purveyor of violence in the world.” He saw the connections between the wars we wage abroad, and the utter indifference we have for poor people, and people of color at home. He saw the necessity of openly critiquing an economic system that will fund war and will reward greed, hand over fist, but will not pay workers a living wage. Five years after the March on Washington, Dr. King was ignoring all those who told him to just stay in his lane, just stick to talking about civil rights. Yet here I am decades later, staying in my lane. I have not been speaking publicly about the relationship between drones abroad and the War on Drugs at home. I have not been talking about the connections between the corrupt capitalism that bails out Wall Street bankers, moves jobs overseas, and forecloses on homes with zeal, all while private prisons yield high returns and expand operations into a new market: caging immigrants. I have not been connecting the dots between the NSA spying on millions of Americans, the labeling of mosques as “terrorist organizations,” and the spy programs of the 1960s and '70s—specifically the FBI and COINTELPRO programs that placed

civil rights advocates under constant surveillance, infiltrated civil rights organizations, and assassinated racial justice leaders. I have been staying in my lane. But no more. In my view, the most important lesson we can learn from Dr. King is not what he said at the March on Washington, but what he said and did after. In the years that followed, he did not play politics to see what crumbs a fundamentally corrupt system might toss to the beggars of justice. Instead he connected the dots and committed himself to building a movement that would shake the foundations of our economic and social order, so that the dream he preached in 1963 might one day be a reality for all. He said that nothing less than “a radical restructuring of society” could possibly ensure justice and dignity for all. He was right. I am still committed to building a movement to end mass incarceration, but I will not do it with blinders on. If all we do is end mass incarceration, this movement will not have gone nearly far enough. A new system of racial and social control will be born again, all because we did not do what King demanded we do: connect the dots between poverty, racism, militarism, and materialism. I’m getting out of my lane. I hope you’re already out of yours.

Source: Alexander 2013.

A former civil rights lawyer, Michelle Alexander has focused on mass incarceration as one of the most pressing racial justice issues for African Americans today. In her Facebook post of August 28, 2013 (see box), she reflects on the possibility that her focus has been too narrow. Drawing inspiration from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Alexander considers the fact that King also condemned America’s militarism and imperialism and explored the connections among wars, poverty, and racism. She reflects on the fact that there are relationships among the outsourcing of jobs overseas, home foreclosures, mass detention of immigrants, and mass incarceration.

In this book, we have focused on the history of the idea of race, the changing nature of racism, and various ideologies and institutions that perpetuate racism. Where do we go from here? Now that we know the extent of racism in U.S. society, what do we do about it? Moreover, is a singular focus on race and racism enough?

PERSPECTIVES ON RACIAL JUSTICE

What is **racial justice**? There is no correct answer to this question, as racial justice looks different depending on your perspective, but we will define it broadly here as the creation of a society devoid of racial oppression. For some people,

racial justice The creation of a society devoid of racial oppression.

racial justice involves the passage of effective laws and policies that create a non-discriminatory society. These laws also look different according to your perspective. For some, racial justice requires granting reparations for people who have suffered racial injustices. For others, strengthening civil rights law is the most effective strategy. Still others advocate for a human rights perspective. And, as we will discuss later, some people advocate for a much more expansive perspective on racial justice—one that addresses gender and economic justice as well. For many thinkers, racial justice involves the eradication of white supremacy.

Recognition, Responsibility, Reconstruction, and Reparations

Racism has caused tremendous harm, and some argue that this harm merits a response. One proposed solution involves providing compensation for victims of racism. Eric Yamamoto (2009) delineates four steps on the path to racial justice from this perspective: recognition, responsibility, reconstruction, and reparations. He argues that these four steps are necessary to begin to redress the harms created by racism. Let's take a look at each step so that we can evaluate the extent to which they might lead us to racial justice.

recognition The first of Yamamoto's (2009) four dimensions of racial justice: recognizing the harms created by racism.

Recognition is the first step, when we recognize the harms created by racism. This step requires empathy, illustrated by society's ability to understand the anger, hurt, and material loss caused by racism. For example, empathetic mothers of white boys would relate to how mothers of black boys felt after Cleveland

> Children wave U.S. flags at the fiftieth anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington.



police officer Timothy Loehmann shot and killed twelve-year-old Tamir Rice within two seconds of arriving outside a recreation center where the sixth-grader was playing with a pellet gun. Recognition extends to the particularity of different groups' experiences, such as how African Americans feel about slavery, Native Americans about genocide, and Japanese Americans about internment. Recognition is viewed as an essential first step because it allows us to reflect on the gravity of racial harms. We must come to terms with the fact that these wrongdoings continue to affect people's lives and outlooks today. Recognition permits everyone to see, for example, that African Americans are unlikely to take jokes about slavery or lynching lightly and that Native Americans are often deeply offended when sports teams use names that are racial slurs, such as the Redskins.

Responsibility asks people to acknowledge that someone is responsible for harms inflicted on racial groups. The question of responsibility often comes up with regard to the enslavement of African Americans. Who is responsible? Individual slaveowners? Their descendants? The financial institutions that supported slavery? All whites? The U.S. government? How do we think about responsibility for slavery given that it was abolished in the United States in 1865? These are difficult questions, but it is clear the United States has yet to atone for the injustice of slavery.

Reconstruction, the third dimension of racial justice, involves acting on the acknowledgment that harm has been committed. Once you recognize that harm has been done and figure out who should be held responsible, it is necessary to take action. One form such action can take is an apology. In 1995, the Southern Baptist Convention issued a resolution apologizing "to all African Americans for condoning and/or perpetuating individual and systemic racism in our lifetime" (Southern Baptist Convention 1995). In 2009, the U.S. Congress issued a formal apology for slavery. The apology, however, came with the caveat that it was not meant to provide the basis for reparations (Thompson 2009). The idea of reconstruction raises the question of how the United States can act on the acknowledgments that slavery is part of the nation's history and that Native Americans' lands were unlawfully taken.

Reparations, the fourth and ultimate dimension of racial justice, refers to the act of repairing damage and providing restitution for past harms. A program of reparations has three main objectives: acknowledgment of past injustice, redress for the injustice, and closure. One example of reparations is the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which acknowledged that a great injustice had been committed against Japanese Americans when they were interned during World War II. The act mandated that Congress pay each victim of internment \$20,000 in reparations and renewed the question of reparations for African Americans.

responsibility The second of Yamamoto's (2009) four dimensions of racial justice: acknowledging that someone is responsible for the harms inflicted on racial groups.

reconstruction The third of Yamamoto's (2009) four dimensions of racial justice: acting on the knowledge that harm has been inflicted on racial groups.

reparations The fourth of Yamamoto's (2009) four dimensions of racial justice: repairing damage and providing restitution for past harms against racial groups.

Economist William Darity (2008) argues that three types of injustices have occurred that justify reparations for African Americans: slavery, legal segregation, and ongoing present-day discrimination. Darity's arguments are a reminder that reparations should contend not only with slavery but with the long shadow it cast, from Jim Crow to contemporary racism.

What would reparations for slavery look like? After emancipation, freed slaves did not receive land in return for their years of labor. Darity (2008) argues that if such land reform had taken place, each former slave would have received ten acres of land. He further estimates that the land would have cost about \$10 per acre in 1865. That means that the 4 million slaves who were emancipated at the end of the Civil War would have received a total of 40 million acres of land, valued at \$400 million. The 2008 value of that money would amount to \$1.3 trillion today—or about \$400,000 per contemporary descendant of enslaved Africans.

Darity's calculation of \$400,000 per person accounts only for slavery, not for decades of legal segregation or for contemporary discrimination. Other scholars have calculated the racial losses and gains of labor market discrimination. Darity's estimate is that discrimination in employment from 1929 to 1969 produced a total benefit of \$1.6 trillion to whites by the 1980s (Darity 2008). The figure would be much higher if adjusted to present-day dollars. Studies continue to show that whites earn an average of 10 to 20 percent more than blacks with similar educational levels and work experience (Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009). The dollar value of accumulated ongoing discrimination is in the trillions. How do we grapple with the fact that discrimination has real monetary costs for African Americans?

Because of historical and ongoing discrimination, some scholars are calling for reparations for African Americans. These reparations could take the form of direct cash transfers. However, reparations do not have to mean sending checks to each African American family. Alternatively, they could also involve investment in education in African American communities, educational scholarships, community development funds, construction of monuments and museums dedicated to African American culture and history, and land grants.

One question we can raise about reparations is whether they would address ongoing racism. Reparations usually focus on past wrongs, yet racism is an ongoing issue. Many white American families accumulated wealth during slavery as a direct result of the enslavement of Africans. There are also many African American families whose impoverishment can be traced back to slavery. It can, however, be very difficult to tease out exactly which families benefited



< An activist at a 2017 march in San Francisco calls for reparations for the descendants of slaves.

from slavery. Nevertheless, it is clear that slavery has had a lasting impact on our society, and it may be unreasonable to expect African Americans to move on and forget about it without some sort of response from the state. Moreover, as conceptualized by William Darity, reparations programs would redress not only the harms of slavery, but also the harms of Jim Crow laws and ongoing discrimination.

Another question about reparations concerns how such a program would take into account the different facets of racism in our society. Racism affects people in different ways depending on their social location and factors such as their race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship. For example, if a reparations program built community centers in impoverished urban communities, it would be helpful mostly to people in those communities, but not to people in rural areas or to middle-class people who would never use those community centers.

Civil Rights

Michelle Alexander is one of many African Americans who have taken up the issue of civil rights as a means to fight for racial justice. **Civil rights**, according to Roy Brooks, are “government-sanctioned freedoms and privileges designed to promote equal opportunity” (2009, 4). Brooks further notes that equal opportunity may require different treatment for groups that are situated differently in society.

civil rights Government-sanctioned protections against discrimination.

Civil rights include the right to a fair trial, the right of each adult in the United States to a vote, the right to not face discrimination in employment, and the right to have equal access to public education. The main idea is that we have the right to *not* be discriminated against, as stated in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Thus, even though we have the right to vote, the government is not required to provide free transportation to voting booths. Instead, the spirit of the law is that the government or other bodies cannot make it more difficult for some groups to vote than others.

A key victory in the civil rights movement was the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which was designed to prevent discrimination from occurring at the voting booth. Prior to passage of this act, some jurisdictions had measures in place that were specifically designed to prevent African Americans from voting.

Just as an act can be passed, its provisions can be repealed. In 2013, the Supreme Court did just that, holding that Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act was unconstitutional. Section 4 required nine states, mostly in the South, to seek federal approval prior to changing their election laws, voting districts, or voter ID provisions, a process called *preclearance*. This part of the act had been included because of the history of discrimination in these nine states. In the 2013 decision, the Supreme Court decided that this measure was unconstitutional and that states could change their voting laws if they so desired.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg issued a dissent in response, arguing that the Voting Rights Act is needed because minority voters continue to experience barriers to voting. She noted that the Voting Rights Act's requirement of preclearance of all voting laws for the nine identified states has a history of effectiveness in upholding minority voting rights (*Shelby County, Alabama, Petitioner v. Eric H. Holder, Jr., Attorney General, et al.*). In contrast, the Court held that these provisions were no longer necessary in today's world. It is remarkable that the Court made this decision even though North Carolina—one of the states in question—had used the new rules to redraw its districts such that there were ten Republican districts and three Democrat districts. Even though North Carolina is evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats, the voting districts have been successfully gerrymandered to ensure that ten out of thirteen seats in North Carolina went to Republican candidates in 2016.

The 2013 repeal of Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act points to a major barrier to civil rights work in the United States: it is hard to legislate against discrimination when many people believe it is no longer a problem. The Supreme Court's justification for repealing these provisions was that racial dynamics

have changed since 1965. As outlined in Chapter Three, they have. However, many would argue that racial inequality in voting rights continues to be an issue. Remarkably, the Supreme Court agreed in a subsequent decision. In May 2017, the Supreme Court struck down North Carolina's redistricting laws, ruling that packing the majority of African Americans into two districts is unconstitutional.

Civil rights victories, despite setbacks, have been monumental in the United States. Nevertheless, the civil rights discourse has its limits. One issue is that in a society in which everyone decries racism and few people consider themselves racist, it can be extremely difficult to prove that a person has indeed been discriminated against. For example, simply showing that African Americans get longer sentences than whites for similar offenses is not enough to prove that African Americans' civil rights have been violated, due to a 1987 Supreme Court decision—*McCleskey v. Kemp*.

Warren McCleskey, a black man, was sentenced to death for murder of a white police officer. McCleskey provided statistical evidence that death sentences were more likely to be given to African Americans convicted of killing whites than vice-versa and thus argued that his sentence was discriminatory. In a 5-4 ruling, the justices ruled that it was not sufficient to show there were statistical differences as these did not show intent. That decision meant that racial bias in sentencing cannot be challenged unless there is clear evidence of discriminatory intent—which is very difficult to prove. Since the *McCleskey v. Kemp* decision, clear evidence of discriminatory *intent* must be provided to have a court case.

A second limitation of the civil rights approach is that U.S. civil rights laws only provide for protection from discrimination and equality of opportunity. They do not guarantee any sort of equality of outcomes. For example, if a corporation pays all of its black employees 20 percent less than its white employees, even though they have similar levels of human capital, a civil rights case could not be brought against the corporation without proof of mechanisms that actively produce this discrimination. Simply showing that the black employees earn less than the white employees is not sufficient evidence to bring a case.

Human Rights

Some thinkers contrast the civil rights vision with a human rights vision (Blau and Moncada 2005). Civil rights laws tend to provide protection from discrimination but do not provide the right to anything in particular; they are thus called negative rights. By contrast, positive rights provide the right

human rights Universal rights such as access to health care, adequate housing, and education.

to something specific, such as health care. For example, under a civil rights vision, you could say that doctors cannot discriminate against patients on the basis of skin color. Under a human rights vision, we could advocate for the right to health care for all, regardless of skin color. We could also envision making demands for the rights to adequate housing and education.

A **human rights** framework, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other doctrines, is more comprehensive than a civil rights framework. It encompasses civil rights and thus includes the right to not face discrimination. Yet, it is broader than just civil rights, and it argues for the universal extension of rights such as good health care and an adequate standard of living. In Belarus, for example, the national constitution guarantees the right to health care. In South Africa, the constitution guarantees the right to adequate housing. These rights are derived from the UDHR and other documents, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

Excerpts from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control....

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Excerpt from the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

Article 12

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
2. The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for:
 - a. The provision for the reduction of the stillbirth-rate and of infant mortality and for the healthy development of the child;
 - b. The improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene;
 - c. The prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases;
 - d. The creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.

The trouble with the human rights framework is that it is not part of U.S. law, and therefore these claims are unenforceable. Incorporating human rights into U.S. law would require changing the Constitution, which some scholars have advocated (Feagin 2001; Blau and Moncada 2006). Judith Blau and Alberto Moncada (2006, 20), for example, argue that people in the United States have no legal recourse when they become homeless, have no health care, or cannot afford to pay for college or even to put dinner on the table, because “the U.S. Constitution fails to give them rights to housing, a job, an education, food security, health care, and so forth. The United States has not signed the international treaties that make states responsible for upholding the rights of their citizens.”

In light of these limitations of our Constitution, scholar Joe Feagin also advocates for a new Constitutional Convention. Unlike the first Constitutional Convention in 1787, Feagin’s assembly would not be made up entirely of white male property owners. Instead, it would have representation from every sector of society. It would have equal representation of men and women; proportional representation from each racial group; and diversity in terms of sexual orientation, disability, and class status. A new Constitutional Convention would provide this country with a renewed chance to create a society that is not built on systemic racism.

STRUGGLES FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

Struggles for racial justice are being waged right now. One recent example is the fight of Native Americans against the Dakota Access Pipeline—a construction project that could endanger the lives and well-being of a Native American tribe. North Dakota has recently undergone an oil boom, in part owing to a new technology called fracking, which allows for oil to be drilled from beneath the earth. One issue oil companies face is getting the oil from North Dakota to the rest of the country. Pipelines allow for crude oil to be transported underground.

In 2015, a coalition of business interests known as Energy Transfer Partners began the process of constructing a pipeline to transport crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. When the Standing Rock Tribe learned the pipeline would pass through their reservation, they requested a full archaeological investigation, which never took place (Sammon 2016). Although North Dakota has experienced economic growth thanks to the oil boom, the Standing Rock Sioux reservation sits in one of the poorest counties in the nation. Nearly 40 percent of the residents of the reservation live below the poverty line, and the unemployment rate is 86 percent. They do not stand to benefit economically from construction of the pipeline, yet they will face consequences if the pipeline bursts.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux feared the pipeline could burst and contaminate the Missouri River. For this reason they mounted a protest in opposition to the pipeline. On April 1, 2015, members of the tribe launched a prayer camp to protest the pipeline. They called on other tribes to join them. Over 300 tribes came together in solidarity in an effort to shut down construction of the pipeline (Democracy Now 2016).

Energy Transfer Partners began construction in May 2016. In July 2016, the Army Corps of Engineers granted permits for the pipeline to cross beneath the Missouri and Cannon Ball rivers. Although this pipeline would pass through tribal lands, the Army Corps of Engineers did not seek approval from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. As a result, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers on July 27, 2016, and asked them to stop construction immediately (EarthJustice 2016).

On September 3, 2016, bulldozers came to prepare the ground to install the pipeline. Hundreds of protestors gathered to protest the construction. When the protestors went through the fence, the result was violent confrontation. Security guards hit and pushed protestors, unleashed dogs on them, and sprayed pepper spray in protestors' faces. Eventually, the protestors were able to stop the construction for that day (Democracy Now 2016).



▲ Protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2016. The construction of the pipeline could endanger the lives and well-being of a tribe of Native Americans.

Over the next couple of months, thousands of people gathered at Standing Rock to protest the pipeline. By December 2016, there were 7,000 people camping at Standing Rock in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Even though authorities have deployed pepper spray, rubber bullets, and water cannons at the protestors, and even though temperatures are well below freezing, the protestors persisted (Mele 2016). However, shortly after taking office, on January 24, President Donald Trump signed a memorandum ordering the Secretary of the Army to expedite approval of the Dakota Access Pipeline. And, on February 22, 2017, state officials ordered the protestors to evacuate. Just before the final evacuation, protestors set fire to the camp.

These struggles for justice are sometimes victorious. We saw a positive development, for example, in the case of Marissa Alexander, an African American woman who went to prison in 2012 for firing a warning shot in self-defense. Marissa's husband, who had assaulted her in the past, had called her names and threatened to beat her after she gave birth to a premature baby. Becoming scared, she picked up a gun and fired a warning shot into her kitchen wall, an act that resulted in her arrest. Marissa was sentenced to twenty years in prison, even though this was her first conviction, her warning shot did not hurt anyone, and even though she was subject to the same self-defense laws in Florida as George Zimmerman was in the Trayvon Martin case. When activists heard of her case, they launched a campaign to have her freed from prison. After two years, Alexander's case was overturned, and she was issued a new trial but remained behind bars (Salzillo 2013). However, owing to activism around the country, she was released just in time for Thanksgiving. Prior to Alexander's retrial, she pleaded guilty to three felony charges of aggravated assault and received a sentence of three years in prison. Since this sentence included the 1,030 days she had already served, she returned to prison for only an additional 65 days and was released from prison in January 2015.

Racial Justice and the Foreclosure Crisis

In Chapter Ten, we learned about racial disparities in housing, including those in the most recent foreclosure crisis. As you may recall, in the 1990s and early 2000s, predatory lenders began to aggressively target black and Latino homeowners and potential buyers, offering subprime loans. By 2000, 18 percent of black or Latino homeowners had these loans—up from only 2 percent in 1993. In comparison, less than 10 percent of white homeowners had subprime loans in 2000. By 2009, over 15 percent of subprime loans were in foreclosure (Rugh and Massey 2010; Dymksi, Hernandez, and Mohanty 2013). Many of these foreclosures happened because homes in black and Latino neighborhoods did not increase in value as anticipated. The unfavorable loans left homeowners owing more money than

their homes were worth, so that foreclosure was often their best financial option. However, as the story of the Garretts shows, sometimes foreclosure is not the best option, especially for families. Family homes have important sentimental value, and some families are simply not willing to walk away from them.

voices

Fighting Against Foreclosures: A Racial Justice Story

In 1990, William and Bertha Garrett purchased their dream home in Detroit and were able to move out of their rented apartment. William owned a barber shop, and Bertha was a homemaker and author. They were happy to find out that most of the residents on the block were, like them, African Americans born in the South who had relocated to Detroit in search of opportunities.

They moved into the home with their six children and immediately got to work beautifying the house and turning it into their family home. They were especially proud of the expansive backyard, which hosted three family weddings.

Within a few years, the Garretts were able to pay off their \$40,000 mortgage in full. In 1998, Bertha received a call from a lender who convinced her to take out a second mortgage for \$45,000. He told her the equity in her home was just sitting there and that she should invest it. Although Bertha did not know it, this man was a predatory lender who sought out families and convinced them to take on loans with unfavorable conditions. A disproportionate number of people who took on these loans were African American.

With children in college and ministry school, the extra money seemed like a good idea. It may have been a good idea, and Bertha may have qualified to take out a second mortgage from a bank with a fixed rate. However, she was not aware of the unfavorable conditions of the loan from the predatory lender and signed on to a new adjustable-rate mortgage. This mortgage meant that they initially had a low interest rate, but when interest rates went up, their debt ballooned to \$190,000—quadruple what they had initially borrowed. The Garretts were unable to keep up with the rising payments and turned to their daughter, Michelle, for help.

Michelle bought the home from them and negotiated the debt down to \$125,000. This brought their monthly payments down to \$900. Soon, however, the payments



Bertha and William Garrett.



went up to \$1,300. With this type of mortgage, rates go up and down with the prevailing interest rates. Meanwhile, William fell ill and became legally blind. As a result, he had to close the barber shop and no longer had an income.

Bertha applied for a loan modification in an effort to reduce the monthly mortgage. Instead, her payments rose to \$1,650 a month. Michelle agreed to help her mother with the payments. She did, until she was laid off from her own job.

Once the Garretts missed payments, the bank sold their mortgage to another company, and the payments jumped to \$2,500 a month. These mortgage payments were for much more than the house was worth: a house down the street sold for \$3,500 during this time.

Unwilling to give up their home, the family continued to scrape together the money to pay until they simply could not and had nothing left to sell. In December 2010, the Garretts received a foreclosure notice.

Shame kept Bertha Garrett from telling anyone about the pending foreclosure. Her husband's health was not improving. She did not know it, but several other homes on her block were also in foreclosure. In the city of Detroit, banks foreclosed on over 100,000 homes between 2000 and 2010.

A bank bought Bertha's home for \$12,000, and she received an eviction notice in November 2011. She was still not willing to leave her home. On her eviction day in January 2012, a small crowd formed around the Garretts's home. Bertha had finally reached out, and several activist groups got together to support her and fight her eviction. Under Detroit law, an eviction cannot take place without a dumpster parked in front of the home. When the dumpster arrived, the residents refused to let it down the street. The driver eventually gave up and left.

Meanwhile, Bertha was downtown, insisting that she be given an opportunity to speak with a representative from her mortgage company. When the secretary told her she couldn't speak with anyone, Bertha lay down in front of the door of the New York Mellon Corporation and refused to move. Her demand was that the corporation sell her the house she called home for the \$12,000 the corporation had paid for it.

Eventually, the mortgage company gave in to the activist pressure and the press attention and sold Mrs. Garrett back her home for \$12,000. (This price may sound low, but on January 31, 2013, the house next door sold for \$14,000.)

Sources: Gottesdiener 2013; Abbey-Lambertz 2012; and Zillow.com.

DREAMers and the Fight for Justice

The United States currently has about 11 million undocumented immigrants. Many of them are youth who have grown up in the United States and who feel that they belong in this country. In many ways, their struggle for rights is a struggle for racial justice because the vast majority of undocumented immigrants are people of color.

In 2001, immigrant rights groups pushed Congress to propose a bill called the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. Although they were unsuccessful in getting the bill passed, their efforts led to a movement designed to fight for the rights of DREAMers—youth who are undocumented and yet have grown up in the United States and have completed most of their schooling in this country. Many of these youth identify as Americans. Often, their parents do not tell them they are undocumented until they are teenagers. It can be devastating for them to find out that they do not have permission to live in the land they call home.

Many of these youths came together and fought for passage of the DREAM Act, which would grant them a path to U.S. citizenship. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, these youth created various organizations, including United We Dream, National Day Labor Organizing Network, and the Immigrant Youth Justice League. But still Congress failed to pass the DREAM Act.

In May 2010, four undocumented youth and their legally present allies decided it was time to move beyond lobbying. They occupied the office of Senator John McCain in Tucson, Arizona, urging him to sign the DREAM Act. Three of the undocumented youth—Mohammad Abdulahi, Yahaira Carrillo, and Lizbeth Mateo, along with legal resident Raul Alcaraz—were arrested. This was a huge risk for these youth, as they could have been deported after being arrested, but fortunately for them, they were released the following day.

Since then, undocumented youth activists have continued to organize sit-ins and other actions to demand their right to stay in this country. In addition to sit-ins, they have organized to fight against deportations on a case-by-case basis. For example, Rigo Padilla was arrested for driving under the influence in January 2009. The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, along with other organizations, held rallies and circulated petitions against Padilla's deportation. In August 2009, he was granted a reprieve from deportation (Puente 2009). Immigrant rights organizers have successfully prevented the deportation of hundreds of people through similar actions.



< Undocumented students from around the country demand passage of the DREAM Act despite the threat of arrest and deportation.

In 2012, DREAMers were able to successfully pressure President Obama into providing deferred action and work permits to undocumented youth. In June 2012, the president issued the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) memorandum, which protects youth from deportation for two years. To qualify, undocumented immigrants must have been under the age of thirty-one on June 15, 2012; have arrived in the United States before the age of sixteen; and be currently enrolled either in school or in the armed forces or already have completed high school. At the time DACA was issued, the Migration Policy Institute estimated that there were 1.76 million eligible youth and that 85 percent were Latin American, 9 percent were Asian, and about 6 percent were from other parts of the world (Batalova and Mittelstadt, 2012). The passage of DACA was a significant victory for the immigrant rights movement, yet it still left activists with a lot of work to do. DACA applied only to a small portion of undocumented people; it left DREAMers' parents in the same situation and was viable for only two years.

Although candidate Donald Trump had promised to end DACA as one of his first steps he would take as president, as of April 2017, he had not done so. Because DACA is an Executive Order, Trump or any subsequent president can revoke DACA with the stroke of a pen. The struggle for the rights of DREAMers and other undocumented migrants thus continues.

RACIAL JUSTICE AND EMPATHY

These stories of communities fighting for their rights are inspiring. Why don't we hear about more of them? How can we stand by in good conscience as people are losing their homes, being unfairly incarcerated or deported each year, or being shot by police officers and security guards without cause? In many cases, we allow these things to happen because we think that the people who face these extreme circumstances brought it on themselves. Undeniably, the majority of people who come into contact with the punitive arm of the state are black or Latino and working class or poor. Yet many middle-class white Americans believe that this country is fair, in part because they themselves are shielded from injustice.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. When people in the United States hear that the father of three children was deported, many respond that the person was here illegally and should have known better. People who make such pronouncements tend to imagine this father to be a Mexican man. What would happen if they imagined a white man? What if a white woman heard that her sister's husband, who came to the United States when he was five, was facing deportation because he allowed his visa to lapse? Would she have more empathy? What if you heard your uncle was going to jail for twenty years because he had been charged with marijuana possession for the third time? What if the first charge occurred when he was eighteen, the second when he was twenty-two, and the third when he was forty-five? How would you feel if it happened to you or someone close to you? What if you heard that your sister was going to jail for ten years because she threatened her abusive husband with a shotgun in order to escape from her home?

Once you are capable of imagining that something like foreclosure or outrageous medical bills or incarceration or deportation could happen to you or someone like you, it is a lot easier to see how unjust our laws are. However, if you think that these things only happen to "people like them" or irresponsible people or criminals, you might not see our justice system as problematic. Racism is an ideology that makes us believe that some people are less worthy than others. Can we imagine a society in which all human life is valued equally?

In the final Voices excerpt in this section, Opal Tometi, co-founder of #BlackLivesMatter, shares her reflections on justice through leadership lessons. She encourages us to take stock of our history—to face our past and to learn from it. Throughout this book, you have learned about many types of racial injustice. What will you do with that knowledge?

Three Leadership Lessons from Opal Tometi

Opal Tometi, co-founder of #BlackLivesMatter, shared these reflections with the 2016 graduates of the University of Arizona, her alma mater.

Lesson #1: Take Stock of Your History

Graduates, I encourage you to embrace your history, have the courage to glean the aspects of it that were positive and of use—values that you’d want to nurture so that they would blossom in your own life. We must have the courage to face our past, some of which we’ll find is positive and some negative. There are terrible histories that you may want to distance yourself from—like the killing and displacement of indigenous peoples, the kidnapping and enslavement of people of African descent, the internment of Japanese people and so on—but it’s your responsibility to know and learn from that history. Whether we like it or not, we are the products of it. Each of us inherits certain privileges, beliefs, and resources, and unless we do the work of examining our past, distilling the values, choosing the ones we want and deliberately discarding the others we know don’t serve humanity—we’ll find ourselves repeating the same errors of the past. And instead of feeling guilty about the past or the privilege, it is more meaningful to be accountable to it, learn from it and choose which side of history you will be on. I hope you’ll join me and choose the side of freedom.



Opal Tometi

Voices

Lesson #2: Don't Fear Obstacles; They Are Opportunities

Not too long ago, there was anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim rhetoric being circulated in everyday conversations and throughout the media. There was talk of new laws that would infringe on people’s ability to access basic services, threats to LGBTQ rights, increased surveillance of Muslims. There was a terrible war going on and stories of civilians and children being brutalized and killed. There was hysteria surrounding all of this, and it all seemed to peak with an impending election. There were many

(continued)

*Continued*

candidates, but only two received the most attention. And there was one candidate in particular who many thought couldn't win; yet despite all odds, this candidate was triumphant. His victory seemed to defy all logic.

I was in shock in 2004 when I learned that George W. Bush was reelected into office. I was equally disturbed by the violent, immoral laws and bankrupt values that were being proposed by our "leaders" at the federal, state and local level. I had seen it firsthand because I worked actively on the campaign to defeat Proposition 200, a piece of legislation that would further disenfranchise undocumented immigrants—people I believe to be the most noble and courageous beings on our planet—people who are so in touch with their inherent human dignity, and that of their families, that they flee dire situations, brave scorching deserts, and perilous waters—in order to have a chance at a better life. So, as a student in 2004 I was dismayed that Prop 200 passed.

I literally thought this had to be the bleakest moment in Arizona and US history! The gorgeous community of friends I had acquired, and the communities from around the world I had learned about through my history books, seemed to be insignificant after the 2004 election, like their lives did not matter. I felt defeated. Until one day, as I wiped away the tears, I began to see more clearly. I realized I didn't need to sit through any more classes; I just needed to get out into the world and begin the work. I saw an opportunity to graduate early and engage the world.

I turned my second major into a minor and wrote my capstone project, a social history of women in Kosovo.

Now, please do not misconstrue the intent of this story. It's not a political fable because in my view standing for human rights and justice should not be partisan. I share this story of my coming-of-age to illustrate that everyday people have power, too. We cannot hand over our agency to those with official titles. For me, the 2004 election was catalytic. And so my second lesson to you, dear Wildcats, is not to fear obstacles but to see them as opportunities.

Lesson #3: Create + Live a New Story

And this leads to my third and final leadership lesson—and it's derived from my early use of social media. It was a campaign to demand that Channel 3 stop using the term "illegal" to describe undocumented people.

I had become passionate about the use of language in a history class I had taken on the Holocaust, where I learned that genocide didn't happen overnight. It was gradual and seemingly ordinary. And it began with language about Jewish people, and their value in the world. I was determined to apply the knowledge from my class to the current context. So I invited



my friends on [social media] to call the news station and demand they stop using pejorative language in their reporting. The term [“illegal” as a noun] is both insensitive and downright negligent. Reporters were behaving as if immigrants were not living, breathing human beings, whose lives actually mattered. Stories of ranchers and Border Patrol Agents contaminating or even emptying bottles of water left in the desert for migrants as they crossed proved to me the gravity of the issue. These actions were despicable and potentially deadly. And our everyday, seemingly ordinary language gave permission to that.

I was determined to apply my history lesson to write a new future. One where no one would be so dehumanized that they could be deemed illegal and disposable. And that’s why I launched [this early social media] campaign. A version 1.0 of online social justice organizing meant to impact real lives offline. And this same logic led me to partner with two other organizers to co-create the Black Lives Matter platform and chapter-based network. A sort of 2.0 version of organizing! This campaign and now movement has demanded an end to anti-blackness and an end to the dehumanization of Black people, capturing the hearts and minds of millions and mobilizing people of conscience across the globe. We were not only determined to write a new story but live a new story so that we could have a world where one day all lives would finally matter.

You too are equipped with some of the most transformative knowledge to create a new world. Your degrees have disproportionally gifted you with the tools to be social architects. You have the capacity to imagine and build an entirely different world. One where we finally have a functioning, vibrant democracy that works for all of us, where the breadth of our human experience and the beauty of our spirits are embraced and we are all able to thrive. Your knowledge can do tremendous good and also tremendous ill. There is nothing inconsequential about being alive in this moment in history and possessing the type of information you have. But here’s the clincher—you must apply the lessons you have learned here ethically, and with heart.

You are each called to lead with courage and with grace—knowing that it’s a gift to be alive in this moment—and your being here is no mistake. Future generations will judge us for what takes place during this pivotal time in US and World history. And in a time full of uncertainty—one thing is certain—we need you to lead. And here’s how: (1) take stock and be accountable to your history; (2) see the obstacle and seize the opportunity; and (3) write and live a new and better story!

Source: Tometi 2016.

MOVING BEYOND RACE

Racism is just one of many forms of oppression that are interlocking and pervasive. Thus, some scholars argue that a singular focus on racism is insufficient to achieve racial justice. Institutionalized racism is a system of social control, yet this system interlocks with other systems of social control and domination, and racial injustice cannot be addressed in isolation.

Intersectional Analyses: Race, Class, Gender

In the 1980s and 1990s, scholars began to focus increasingly on the connections among race, gender, and class. These scholars of **intersectionality** argued that racism, sexism, and classism cannot be studied independent of one another. Instead, we need to focus on how forms of oppression intersect. A scholar of intersectionality would argue that the forms of oppression experienced by a working-class, black lesbian will be different from those faced by Barack Obama, for example. These two very different people will confront different forms of oppression and will experience their blackness in different ways because of how their statuses interact with one another. An antiracist agenda designed to help people like Barack Obama may do little or nothing for working-class or poor African Americans.

Sociologist Zulema Valdez (2011) argues that the social structure in the United States is composed of three interlocking systems of oppression: capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy. **Capitalism** produces inequality through a profit-based system. **Patriarchy** is a system of oppression that ensures male dominance in terms of power and property. **White supremacy** is a system of racial stratification that places whites at the top of the hierarchy. Valdez (2011), following the work of Patricia Hill Collins (2004), contends that these three systems are interdependent and that we cannot understand one system of oppression without looking at the others.

In 1991, Kimberlé Crenshaw published a foundational article on intersectionality arguing that this framework is necessary to understand the experiences of women of color who have survived domestic violence. In her study of women in a Los Angeles shelter, Crenshaw (1991) found that the women who seek protection are usually poor. Their poverty is in part a result of limited opportunities for women of color. They end up at the shelter because they are fleeing domestic abuse and also because their poverty means they cannot afford to go elsewhere. Women with financial means at their disposal do not end up at the shelter. In general, women's experiences of domestic violence are linked to patriarchy, and the state's response (or lack thereof) is related

intersectionality A simultaneous look at race, ethnicity, class, and gender oppression.

capitalism A profit-based economic system that produces inequality.

patriarchy A system of oppression that ensures male dominance in terms of power and property.

white supremacy A system of racial stratification that places whites at the top of the hierarchy.

to racism. In sum, to understand why women of color are overrepresented in domestic violence shelters, we must look at this issue through the lenses of race, class, and gender. Alone, each of these frameworks provides us with a more limited understanding than an intersectional framework can.

The focus of most intersectional work is analytical; it thus helps us understand how racism works in conjunction with other forms of oppression. However, this body of work leaves open the question of how racial justice looks from an intersectional perspective. Do we need to dismantle patriarchy to fight racism? Do we need to undo class oppression to achieve racial justice? How might we do that?

An intersectional framework could be used to critique the reparations perspective. The argument would be that since the disadvantaged status of African Americans, for example, varies by gender, class, and sexuality, any approach to reparations must take these distinctions seriously. Otherwise, the approach risks reproducing patriarchy and capitalist inequality.

Racism and Capitalism

The consideration of intersectionality brings us to questions about capitalism's role in racial inequality. Is it possible to eradicate racism without eradicating capitalism? Is racism a necessary component of capitalism?

The other side of this question is: How would capitalism look without racism? What if everyone in the United States, regardless of racial status, had



< Arizona resident Leslie Evans wipes tears from her eyes as she talks about what it is like to be stuck in the cycle of domestic violence. An intersectional framework can shed light on why women of color are overrepresented in domestic violence shelters.

an equal chance of being rich, middle class, or poor? Would that be racial justice? Even in that scenario, with so many poor people in the United States, millions of nonwhites would continue to be poor. Millions of people would still lose their homes and be homeless. Is it even possible to eradicate racism without eradicating capitalism? Or, as Michelle Alexander (2010) argues, would another system of social control emerge to justify enormous inequalities?

It is clear that racism and class oppression are connected. For example, African Americans are disproportionately represented among the poor. In this sense, racial oppression is in large part—though not exclusively—a question of class oppression.

West Indian historian Eric Williams famously wrote in 1944 that “slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery.” Both Williams (1944, 6) and Audrey Smedley (2007) argue that racism arose from the exploitative relationships of colonialism, slavery, and capitalism. In this historical sense, racism cannot be separated from capitalism. Racial divisions among workers continued well after slavery. In the 1880s, white Californians used racial vitriol to protest against Chinese workers. In the 1930s, divisions between black and white workers prevented unions from forming and demanding fair wages and benefits for all. In the 1960s, racial divisions in the civil rights movement weakened the movement. It is conceivable that without racism, some other ideology would have arisen to justify inequality and to prevent the working class from uniting to promote its own interests. However, it is also clear that racism has been detrimental to all members of the working class.

Racism in this country has evolved over time, from codified racial disparities to the color-blind racism that predominated during the Obama presidency to the rise of neo-Nazism today. Similarly, capitalism has changed from merchant and industrial capitalism to the neoliberal and global capitalism of today.

Racism is simultaneously a system of oppression and a set of ideologies. When we think about how to overcome racism, we have to keep this dual character in mind. Racism needs to be rooted out at the ideological, psychological, and systemic levels. These processes have to be concurrent—they can’t happen separately.

Let’s think about this concretely: Is it possible for us to have a society free of racism in which all of the gardeners are both underpaid and Latino men? If we worked extremely hard to rid people of biases without changing the system, it seems that plan would backfire because new ideologies (or the same old ones) would emerge to explain the racially unequal system. Conversely, if we fought to rid the world of racial inequalities and yet did nothing to work against deeply held racist beliefs, it would be hard to maintain racial equality. If people

continued to think that black men are lazy, employers would continue to be less likely to hire them for jobs. In this simplified version, you should be able to see that the ideologies and practices of racism work together.

Our society is remarkably unequal. Racial disparities are enormous: black and Latino families have just 5 percent of the wealth of white families. Overall disparities are also staggering: 1 percent of Americans own nearly half of the wealth in this country (Norton and Ariely 2011). In the context of massive overall inequality, it makes no sense to ask questions about the utility of fighting against racism without paying attention to the economic inequalities created by capitalism. Even if there were no racial disparities in income and wealth, millions of people of color in the United States would still be poor. Globally, billions of nonwhite people would continue to be poor because of the extent of global inequality.

At the same time, perhaps racism is what permits this massive inequality to exist. Perhaps a world without racist ideologies would inherently be a more equal world. Perhaps the devaluation of black lives is what makes it possible for the United States to have the largest prison system in the world. Perhaps the devaluation of Arab lives is what made the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan possible.

What do you think? Is racism integral to capitalism, or can we root out racism without fundamentally changing the economic structure? Would a battle against racism necessarily create less economic inequality? What about a battle against patriarchy? Do these battles have to be fought in conjunction? These are big questions, but we do not have to answer them before moving toward racial justice.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter raises more questions than it answers. This is because there is neither a clear-cut path toward racial justice nor a unified vision. Racism is a scourge on our society, yet it is so deeply entrenched that seeing a way out of it is difficult. However, activists and everyday people continue to fight for racial justice in many ways.

Some people advocate for civil disobedience in response to particular racial injustices, as we have seen in the stories in this chapter. Others contend we need to work in the legal arena. Still others argue we need a new Constitutional Convention. Some activists are fighting for reparations, while some are advocating for a complete overthrow of the systems of white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy.

What do you think? What is your vision for racial justice? Do you see a place for yourself in the struggle?

Finally, we can reflect on the fact that racial oppression affects each of us differently. Nevertheless, racial divisions among blacks, whites, Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans are harmful to all of these groups. No matter your social location, you can fight against mass incarceration, mass deportation, school closings, and predatory lenders. You can fight against the fear and loathing that make these problems so widespread. And you can fight this fight because winning it will create a better society for all.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

racial justice 415	reparations 417	capitalism 434
recognition 416	civil rights 419	patriarchy 434
responsibility 417	human rights 422	white supremacy 434
reconstruction 417	intersectionality 434	

14.1 What does racial justice look like? (pp. 415–423)

- Three main perspectives on racial justice are reparations, civil rights, and human rights. Each perspective has its benefits and limitations.

Review

- » What are the steps toward racial justice that Yamamoto (2009) outlines? Give examples of each.
- » What are the differences between civil and human rights?

Critical Thinking

- » What do you think of the suggestion for a new Constitutional Convention? What are some issues that such a convention might address?
- » Does racial justice look different for various groups? In what ways?

14.2 How can we achieve racial justice? (pp. 424–429)

- Communities can achieve victories in the fight for racial justice by coming together.

Review

- » Why is the struggle for legalization of immigrants a question of racial justice?

Critical Thinking

- » What activist tactics do you think are most effective for securing racial justice, and why?

14.3 What is the connection between racial justice and empathy? (pp. 430–433)

- Achieving racial justice is especially challenging when people lack empathy.

Review Questions

- » What is empathy?

Critical Thinking

- » What is the role of white Americans in the struggle for racial justice?
- » Is racism harmful to white Americans? Why or why not?

14.4 Why is a singular focus on racism insufficient to achieve racial justice? (pp. 434–437)

- Race intersects with other forms of oppression; these interlocking oppressions must be taken into account in any attempt to achieve racial justice.

Review Questions

- » What is the relationship between racism and capitalism?
- » How is intersectionality relevant to racial justice?

Critical Thinking

- » Is it possible to achieve racial justice in a capitalist society? Why or why not?
- » How does racism affect different racial groups in distinct ways, and what does that mean for racial justice?

Talking about Race

Empathy requires recognizing that other people might feel differently than you do. For example, it is hard for some people to understand why many African Americans are deeply offended by the usage of imagery such as nooses and chains—objects that harken back to slavery. It can also be hard for white people to understand why some Halloween costumes are racist. During the Halloween season of 2013, some white people dressed up as Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman. In one instance, a young man painted his face black, wore a hoodie with a bloodstain on it, and was carrying Skittles in one hand and iced tea in the other. How can consideration of racial empathy inform a conversation about potentially offensive Halloween costumes?



Nelson Mandela. Werner Opitz. *(dieKleinert/Alamy Stock Photo)*

Thinking Globally

Race and Racisms in France, South Africa, and Brazil

As You Read

- 15.1** How do other countries differ from the United States in racial dynamics?
- 15.2** In France, what are the effects of the government's insistence on not recognizing racial categories?
- 15.3** In South Africa, how does the legacy of apartheid affect racial dynamics?
- 15.4** In Brazil, how does the government-promoted idea of a racial democracy affect race relations?

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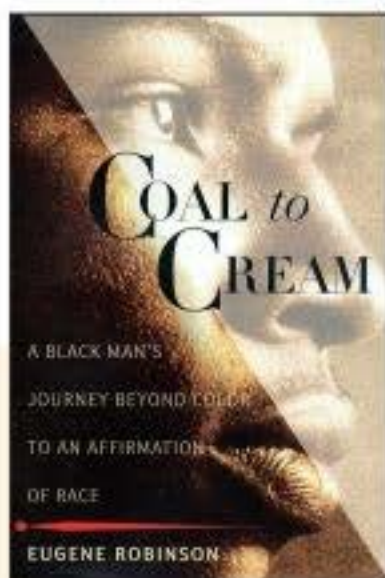
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When journalist Eugene Robinson traveled to Brazil, he had trouble figuring out who was black and who was white. To find out, he asked other people. The answers were not always what he expected. He describes many of these interactions in his book *Coal to Cream*.

These weren't trivial questions. I could see that there were black people in Brazil, just like in the United States, and white people, although the proportions were obviously different. I knew that there had been a history of slavery and eventual emancipation. And yet I had the sense that the way people here thought of race was not at all the same way I thought of it. Even among my group at the beach, with the range of skin tones and hair types pretty much covering the whole spectrum, there was none of the obvious discomfort I had often felt whenever race came up in a mixed group in the States, none of the paralyzing fear of saying the wrong thing. Still, I wasn't making much sense of the inconsistent and contradictory things I was hearing. Race was important; race was trivial. There were tons of black people in Brazil; no, there really weren't that many. I wasn't getting it.

I decided to give up on theoretical classification and focus instead on the concept of race relations, which I figured would translate more easily. I turned to my colleague's Brazilian girlfriend, whose name I recall as Velma, and asked what it was really like being black in Brazil.

She answered with a look of genuine surprise.

"But I'm not," she said. "I'm not black."

She smiled at me as one smiles at a child who just doesn't understand, an isn't-he-precious kind of smile. But then I saw her quickly glance around at the others, making eye contact, and I had the sense she was somehow seeking to validate the declaration she had just made.

Velma had been born more than a thousand miles away, in the poor northeastern part of Brazil, the equivalent of our Deep South—a place where a plantation economy once flourished, where millions of African slaves had worked the fields, where slavery had persisted a full generation past the end of the American Civil War. It was obvious to me at first glance that Velma was primarily a descendant of those slaves. There was a lot of Indian in her, but mostly African. She was a small woman with long jet-black hair, flaring nostrils, high cheekbones, and brown skin at least a couple of shades darker than mine. It wasn't even a close call, in my book. But she was telling me she wasn't black.

I blurted out, “But you must be, Velma. I’m black, and you’re as dark as I am.”

She put her arm next to mine, to compare: Yes, she was darker. Positively, definitively darker.

“But this color isn’t black,” she said. “This isn’t black at all.”

Trapped on what she clearly saw as the wrong side of the color line I was trying to draw, Velma maintained flatly that as far as she was concerned, I wasn’t really “black” either. I explained that in the United States I certainly was and always would be, and that so, in fact, would she. Velma found this hard to understand, and certainly wasn’t about to accept it. She allowed that I might not be “white,” but insisted that at the very least I fit well within the ill-defined parameters of *pardo*, which roughly means light-brown-skinned. “Black” was for her more of a description than a group designation, and it meant people with skin much darker than mine.

Or, of course, hers.

Source: Robinson 1999, 11–13.

In this excerpt, we see how Robinson struggles to come to terms with the fact that while he may see Velma as “black,” she disagrees. As we have read throughout this book, race is a social construction. People are not born “black” or “white.” Instead, people label each other as “black” or “white” according to social conventions. It is thus possible for Robinson to perceive Velma as black while she herself does not, and it would be inaccurate to say that one of them is right and the other wrong. The exchange between the two is an example of how racial categories can be constructed differently in different places.

In fact, one of the best ways to grasp how racial ideologies work is to examine racial ideologies in distinct locales. In this chapter, we will compare the United States with France, South Africa, and Brazil. Through these comparisons, we will see how distinct ideologies and practices can be deployed to achieve similar outcomes—the dominance and privilege of one group over others.

HOW DO OTHER COUNTRIES DIFFER FROM THE UNITED STATES IN RACIAL DYNAMICS?

The United States has a unique racial past—one that includes the genocide of Native Americans, the enslavement of Africans, mass repatriation of Mexicans, and the denial of citizenship to Asians. Additionally, the United

States implemented a formal segregation system for several decades in the early twentieth century. The legal history of segregation in the United States differentiates it from many countries, with the notable exception of South Africa. The idea of race is important in the United States. However, this idea was not invented here. Instead, as we learned in Chapter One, the idea of race emerged from the oppressive systems of colonialism, slavery, and European expansion. These systems had a global impact, and concepts of whiteness and blackness exist in each place touched by them. The countries examined here—France, South Africa, and Brazil—each had unique dynamics of colonialism and slavery, and these dynamics influenced the racial ideologies that evolved in them.

Today, France, South Africa, Brazil, and the United States have distinct racial makeups. In the United States and France, people of African descent are a minority; in South Africa, they are a majority; and in Brazil, people of African and European descent are about equal in number. These distinct racial demographics have played a role in the evolution of racism and interracial relations in each country (Marx 1996).

Brazil and South Africa have, in some ways, histories that are polar opposites. Brazil's self-identity has historically been one that celebrates racial mixing and upholds the idea of a racial democracy. In contrast, South Africa formed its national identity on a legacy of **apartheid**—legally enforced racial segregation—and banned racial mixing. However, both countries have undergone significant changes in recent decades. South Africa ended apartheid in 1994 and now proclaims itself a “rainbow nation,” a country that embraces its diversity. Brazil has recognized the persistence of racial inequality and has instituted racial quotas to increase the numbers of black and brown people who can attend university (da Silva 2006, 2012).

France has historically maintained a color-blind stance, meaning that anyone, regardless of skin color or place of birth, can become French. The country distinguishes officially only between French nationals and foreigners. People are either French or they are not—ethnic categories such as Martinican French or Senagalese French are not legally recognized in France. Unlike the United States, France does not collect official data on the racial self-identifications of its residents.

France has no history of official segregation or of denial of citizenship to people based on their race. In the colonies, African subjects who attained a certain social status were permitted to become French citizens. There were no laws that prevented Africans from becoming French because of their ancestry. France also transformed some of its colonies into overseas departments

apartheid Legally enforced racial segregation that endured from 1948 to 1994 in South Africa.



▲ Mourners sing outside the home of former South African president and anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela following his death in 2013. Even after the end of apartheid, tremendous inequality has persisted in South Africa.

(similar to states) of the French Republic. In 1946, for example, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion, and French Guiana became overseas departments. People born in these places hold French citizenship. Despite an official rhetoric of equality, however, French people of African and Arab descent continue to be socially and economically marginalized both on the mainland and in these overseas departments.

Apartheid has finally been dismantled in South Africa, yet tremendous inequality persists even without official barriers in place. In this respect, South Africa is similar to other countries that maintain racial inequality through entrenched practices instead of laws. Apartheid nevertheless shapes how South Africans understand racial inequality. Graziella Moraes Dias da Silva (2012) found that South African black professionals often attributed continuing racism in the postapartheid era to competition for economic resources—which was one of the main reasons for instituting the apartheid system. One black banker in South Africa told her that racism is “about resources.” He, like many other black South Africans, argued that racism is a strategy to ensure that whites continue to hold political and economic power. Moraes Dias da Silva contrasts this assessment with racial dynamics in Brazil, where the

absence of a recent history of official racism has created a situation in which blacks are more likely to blame history or ignorance for racism and unlikely to attribute racial inequality to institutional racism. In this way, Brazil is similar to France, where institutional racism is not recognized, even though there is a lot of evidence that people of color are treated differently than whites (Body-Gendrot 2010).

In each of these countries, people of African descent are the most likely to occupy the lowest rungs of the socioeconomic ladder. What is interesting for our purposes here is that this same outcome has been achieved through very different mechanisms, although a colonial legacy is a common factor. These distinct mechanisms have, in turn, created a unique brand of racial discourse and racial inequality in each place.

The United States, Brazil, and South Africa were all colonized by European powers. In contrast, France was a significant colonial power in its own right. The vast majority of immigrants in France come from France's former colonies. In Brazil, laws and customs set in place during the colonial period continue to negatively affect people of African descent. In South Africa, colonialism can be seen as a precursor to apartheid, which continues to influence racial inequality today. In the United States, the idea of freedom invoked in the struggle for independence from England was limited to white men, and this creed continues to affect the nation today. As we will see, each country has a unique history, yet racial inequality and race-based subordination are constants.

RACE AND RACISM IN FRANCE

France established colonial ventures in the Caribbean, North Africa, Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. During the mid-1700s, the French were involved in the capture and transport of nearly half a million slaves from Africa to the Antilles—Haiti, Martinique, and Guadeloupe. The French participated in the slave trade until slavery was abolished in French colonies in 1848. The end of the slave trade, however, did not mean the end of French interests in Africa.

French Colonies in Africa

In 1854, a Frenchman, Louis Léon César Faidherbe (1818–1889), was appointed governor of Senegal, marking the establishment of the French empire in sub-Saharan Africa. As the French army continued its march across Africa, it named governors of each territory it claimed, including Sudan, Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. Together, these countries formed the French West African

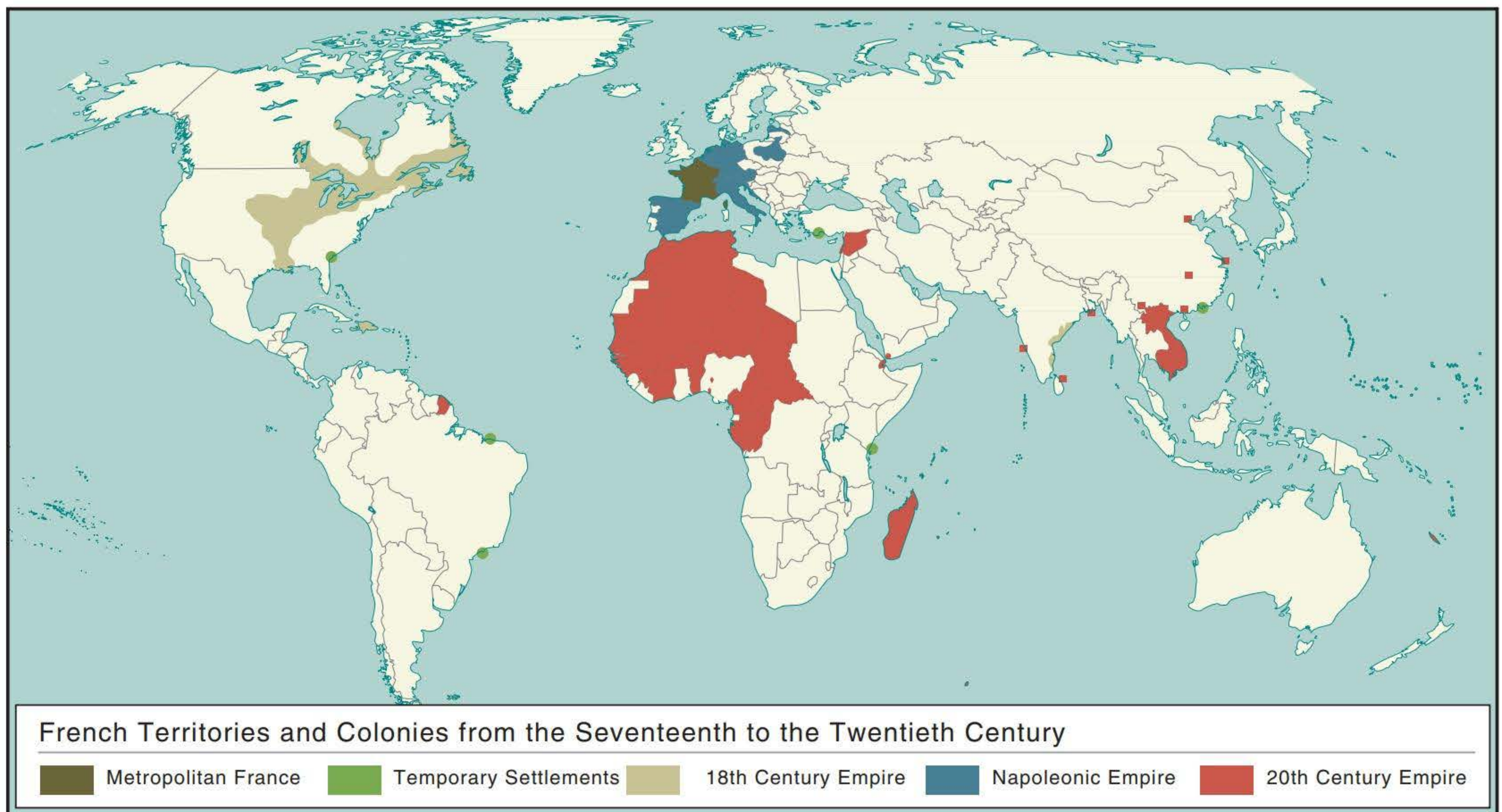


FIGURE 15-1.

French Territories and Colonies from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century

Federation, which was founded in 1895 and headquartered in Dakar, Senegal. Later, Chad, Togo, Niger, Mali, Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi, and Cameroon were brought under French control (McNamara 1989) (Figure 15-1).

The French designated Africans as subjects rather than as citizens. One reason for this is that many French people viewed Africans as too primitive to be able to fully exercise their rights as citizens. In 1912, France passed a law that permitted educated, property-owning, and taxpaying African subjects to become French citizens. This law applied, however, to only a very small percentage of African subjects.

The French justified their forcible acquisition of African lands by asserting that these were civilizing missions, designed to uplift inferior races. Their stated goal was to liberate and civilize Africans. The French viewed Africans as backward and stuck in traditional ways, and they justified their takeover of African lands as part of their mission to modernize the continent. To this end, the French developed schools that taught Africans hygiene along with basic reading and writing skills. These schools also taught African children to speak French (Conklin 1998).

The French colonial empire in Africa endured until 1960 (McNamara 1989). The end of this empire was also the beginning of a large-scale migration of sub-Saharan and North Africans to France—primarily to work in the low-skill, low-wage sector of the labor market in large urban areas.

The French Antilles

French interests in the Caribbean were initially related to the cultivation of sugarcane for export. To this end, the French brought hundreds of thousands of African slaves to the Caribbean. With the end of the slave trade, French interests in the region shifted. The French developed public schools in the Antilles much earlier than in Africa, beginning in the 1880s. In these schools, French teachers taught children in Guadeloupe and Martinique how to be French. Many of these Antillean children were later sent to the African colonies as military and state officials of the French empire (Grosfoguel 1999).

People from the French Antilles may travel to mainland France freely, as they have French citizenship. However, Antilleans did not begin to migrate in large numbers until the early 1960s, when many traveled to mainland France to work in the French public service. Today, nearly half a million first- and second-generation migrants from the Antilles reside in France—more than the entire population of Martinique (400,000) (Fleming 2012).

Although Antilleans were given access to public administration jobs in France, they have encountered a glass ceiling: even with proper qualifications, they rarely receive promotions to higher levels of government. Moreover, with the shrinking of the French government in the 1980s and 1990s, second-generation French Antilleans did not have access to the same public administration jobs as their parents did (Grosfoguel 1989).

African Immigration to France

Prior to 1974, people who lived in former French African colonies were able to travel freely to France, through what has been called the open-door policy. Most of these African migrants were men who traveled to France in search of temporary labor. However, after the end of the open-door policy in the 1970s, more migrants decided to settle permanently in France, fearing they would not be able to return (Sargent and Larchanché-Kim 2006).

In the 1970s and 1980s, France passed a series of restrictive immigration laws. The new laws had two primary unintended consequences: (1) they encouraged migrants to stay instead of engaging in temporary labor migration, and (2) clandestine migration networks emerged. The 1974 laws ended temporary labor migration, yet allowed for family reunification. As a result,



▲ A demonstration for the regularization of undocumented migrants (*les sans-papiers*) in Paris, France.

more families migrated permanently to France to join their husbands and fathers. As immigration laws tightened, many immigrants were transformed into undocumented or clandestine immigrants. In France, undocumented migrants call themselves *les sans-papiers*: those without papers (Sargent and Larchanché-Kim 2006). About 10 percent of the 61 million people who live in France are foreign-born, and only a small percentage of these immigrants are undocumented. This situation is distinct from the one that exists in the United States, where, in 2013, nearly a quarter of immigrants were undocumented.

Discrimination and Racial and Ethnic Inequality in France Today

The outskirts of French cities—called *banlieues*—are, in many cases, underserved neighborhoods that are home to minority populations. Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy often commented on the undesirability of immigrants, especially North Africans, who, he contended, do not wish to become French. For example, just before the uprisings of the immigrant community in October and November 2005, Sarkozy referred to immigrant youth in the *banlieues* as “*racaille*” (*scum* or *rabble*, a word with racist connotations).

les sans-papiers Literally, “those without papers”; undocumented migrants in France.

banlieues The outskirts or suburbs of French cities.

Many *banlieues* consist of public housing built in the 1970s to accommodate immigrant families. The *banlieues* continue to house primarily immigrants, people from overseas departments, and their children. These immigrants come primarily from North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and the French Antilles (Body-Gendrot 2010). Today, over half of France's immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa and Tunisia live in public housing, as do about 40 percent of the nation's immigrants from Morocco and Tunisia and 40 percent of mainland residents from the overseas departments (Pan Ké Shon 2009).

The term *banlieues* could be translated as *suburbs*. However, these neighborhoods have more in common with inner cities in the United States than with suburbs, as their inhabitants are primarily poor or working class and mostly nonwhite. In some *banlieues*, the unemployment rate is as high as 40 percent—similar to the rate in some inner cities in the United States. Police harassment is endemic, and police officers routinely ask residents to show their papers.

In late October 2005, these suburbs burst into rebellion across France in response to high unemployment, poor schools, and police harassment (Murray 2006). The unrest lasted for twenty-one days. The uprisings, triggered by the death of two young men who were electrocuted while hiding from the police, spread across France to 250 towns and cities. Three weeks later, nearly 3,000 people had been arrested and 9,000 cars had been set on fire. The police responded with a show of force, using tear gas, stun grenades, and rubber bullets. The vast majority of those who rioted were young second-generation immigrants in the *banlieues*. The 2005 rebellions are part of a long history of uprisings in the *banlieues*, often in response to police violence (Body-Gedrot 2010).

It is difficult to be sure how much racial or ethnic inequality there is in France because, by law, the state cannot collect systematic data on race or ethnicity (Body-Gendrot 2010). The reluctance to collect such data emanates from the state's entrenched denial that race and ethnicity are important in France. However, over the past few years, a few studies have provided empirical support for the claim that people of African and Arab descent are marginalized in France. For example, some studies have reported that immigrants from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, as well as mainland residents from overseas departments, have fewer educational opportunities than the majority population. The children of immigrants from North Africa are less than half as likely as their counterparts with French parents to have a high school diploma (Brinbaum, Mogue rou, and Primon 2010).

Unemployment is also higher for minority than for majority populations. In France, 81 percent of the male majority population is employed.

The employment rates are similar for immigrants but not for their children. The rates are much lower for second-generation male immigrants than for the majority population: only 53 percent of second-generation sub-Saharan Africans and 61 percent of second-generation Moroccans and Tunisians are employed (Lhommeau, Meurs, and Primon 2010). Overall unemployment for French university graduates is 5 percent, but 26 percent for North African university graduates who live in France (Murray 2006).

Justice for Theo

France has been rocked by tensions that flared up over a police officer allegedly sexually assaulting with a truncheon a 22-year-old black man called Theo in the Parisian suburb of Aulnay-Sous-Bois. This brutal aggression is the latest police violation to dominate headlines in French mainstream media and to trigger protests against police brutality.

Theo was on his way to visit a friend when the police stopped him to check his ID. A video of Theo's violent arrest by the police [that] circulated on the internet shows him on the ground against a wall, being beaten by four policemen. In his account to the media, Theo explained how he fell face down as police spat racist insults and sodomised him with a police baton during the brutal arrest. The French police called the violent assault "an accident."

Theo was subsequently treated in hospital. His case triggered protests in several Parisian suburbs which at times turned into riots. Protesters and the police clashed, notably in the suburban town of Bobigny, where cars and buses were burned and stores were ransacked.

At this stage, the French Court of Justice is looking into how to assess the nature of the assault against Theo and whether it should be considered rape or an act of violence. This, according to the court, can be established only by determining the nature of the perpetrator's intention at the time of the incident.



Protestors in Paris in 2017 hold a banner reading "Justice and Dignity/Stop Police Impunity."

Voices

(continued)



Continued

The French Penal Code reserves a harsh punishment for rape. Article 222-23 of the law states that: “Any act of sexual penetration, whatever its nature, committed against another person, through violence, constraint, threat or surprise, is a rape. Rape is punishable by 15 years of imprisonment.”

A conviction of rape and a jail sentence for the policeman could be considered by Theo’s family a victory and satisfy people’s demands for justice. But if the policeman is acquitted, a repeat of the 2005 riots—triggered by the deaths of two teenagers during a police chase—is highly probable.

....

In April 2009, Amnesty International published a report denouncing the French police violations and the failure of the French justice system to put an end to such acts. “Police ill-treatment, racial abuse and excessive use of force continues while procedures for investigating such allegations are still failing to meet the standards required by international law.”

But neither the Amnesty International report nor the French court rulings nor the denunciations of the French civil associations could put an end to the phenomenon. The French police continues to justify its abuses with the lack of human and material resources, as if respecting individuals’ human dignity is somehow associated with material resources and/or the number of policemen on the ground.

An acute crisis of confidence has long existed between the inhabitants of suburban neighbourhoods and the French state that almost always manifests its presence in the suburbs only through its police force. Such a dynamic automatically transforms its relationship with French citizens of the suburbs into a purely authoritarian one.

As Amar Henni, a leading youth worker in the district of La Grande Borne on the southern outskirts of Paris, told *The Guardian*: “the biggest unresolved problem is the relationship between youth and police. The state took a security approach, rather than a social or education response.”

Therefore, in the absence of a genuine policy on integration and urban development in these “sensitive urban zones” (as designated by the French administration), where unemployment is more than twice the national rate and where schools have a high turnover of often inexperienced teachers, and as long as the successive governments refuse to acknowledge their responsibility for this social failure, without real commitments and changes, unfortunately riots and cars and shops set on fire will continue to occur every time the police commits such horrible acts.

When state violence becomes systematic and rarely punished, the society falls into a vicious cycle where violence only triggers more violence. The case

of Theo is a natural outcome of the failure of the state—on all levels—to combat racism and discrimination and to put an end to police violence and abuses against the inhabitants of the suburbs.

Source: Saad 2017.

.....

Minority populations are also more likely to report having poor health. Immigrant men are 30 percent more likely than native-born French men to report bad health. Immigrant women are 80 percent more likely. These health disparities are in large part the result of the lower socioeconomic status of immigrants (Pan Ké Shon and Robello 2010).

Very few data are available on racial profiling by police in France. However, in one study, researchers recorded the racial or ethnic status of each person stopped by police in train stations, as well as the status of each person who walked by. They found that people who appeared to be of Arab origin were stopped 7.8 times more than those who appeared to be white and that those perceived to be black were 6 times as likely to be stopped. Black and Arab youth who wore particular clothing styles were the most likely to be stopped. When the researchers presented the French police with these findings, the police denied that racial profiling was going on. The French police agreed that the disparities existed but responded that they are instructed to stop anyone who appears to be involved in youth gangs and that the police were therefore just doing their job (Body-Gendrot 2010).

The question of discrimination has finally begun to be discussed in the public arena in France. A European Union survey conducted in 2015 found that 64 percent of people in France believe that ethnic discrimination is widespread, and 46 percent reported that there was employment discrimination based on skin color or ethnic origin (Eurobarometer 2015). Another study found that 53 percent of French men and 60 percent of French women believe that people in France frequently experience discrimination on the basis of their skin color or immigrant origin. At the same time, 78 percent of people born in an overseas department reported that they had experienced discrimination on the basis of their skin color, as did over 80 percent of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa. Eighty-five percent of Algerians reported having faced discrimination on the basis of their national origin, as did 87 percent of Moroccans and Tunisians (Brinbaum, Moguérou, and Primon 2010). Recognizing the wide disparities that exist will be the first step toward creating a more just society in France.

RACE AND RACISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has a well-known history of legally sanctioned segregation and continued white racial dominance. Although people of African descent were, and remain, a majority of its population, Europeans were able to subjugate the native black population and subject it to repressive racial domination for centuries.

Colonialism in South Africa: The British and the Dutch

Europeans first arrived in South Africa in the seventeenth century. This first group was primarily Dutch and settled in what became the Cape Colony. Their descendants began to call themselves *Afrikaners* (*Africans* in Dutch) and slowly developed their own language, culture, and identity distinct from those of their ancestors in Holland. Eventually, however, Britain set its sights on the Cape Colony as a viable trading point at the southern tip of Africa. In 1806, the British took control of the Cape Colony from the Afrikaners, transforming it into a British colony. The Afrikaners were resistant to British rule and opposed to what they viewed as the more liberal racial policies of the British. Thousands of Afrikaners trekked out of the Cape to the north of South Africa, where they established their own republics in the 1850s. However, the discovery of diamonds in those republics in 1877 and of gold in 1886 meant that the British were no longer content to allow the Afrikaners to control the north. The British desire to control the lands of the Afrikaners, who had become known as the Boers, led to the Boer War.

Also called the Second War of Freedom, the **Boer War** (1899–1902) was waged by the British to bring all of South Africa under its colonial power so that Britain would have access to South Africa's mineral wealth. The Afrikaners fought hard for their independence and control over their land but eventually lost. Following the end of the war, the two British colonies (Cape and Natal) merged with the two Boer republics (Transvaal and Orange Free State) to create a unified South Africa in 1910. South Africa would remain a British colony until 1961.

The Apartheid Era (1948–1994)

After the costly British victory in the Boer War, the British had good reason to desire reconciliation with the Afrikaners. The Afrikaners asked the British to create policies excluding the native Africans from positions of power to ensure their own upward mobility. In 1936, the South African government removed native Africans from the voting rolls. In 1948, the government imposed apartheid, which was devastating to native Africans but brought socioeconomic

Afrikaners Descendants of the Dutch colonists who settled in South Africa.

Boer War Also called the Second War of Freedom; a conflict from 1899 to 1902 in which the British fought the Dutch to bring all of South Africa under British colonial power.

success to Afrikaners. The proportion of Afrikaners working in white-collar jobs more than doubled between 1946 and 1977, from 29 to 65 percent (Marx 1996).

Apartheid was a system of formal, legal racial segregation that endured from 1948 to 1994 in South Africa. Under this system, interracial sex and marriage were prohibited, and residential segregation by race was mandated. With the 1950 Group Areas Act, almost one million people were forcibly removed from where they lived because the government declared those areas to be exclusive to whites. Segregation was enforced in all areas of life: housing, hospitals, transportation, education, and public facilities such as beaches and parks. Under apartheid, white children were afforded the best educational opportunities and soon were able to secure the best employment options, both because of their education and because of enforced segregation. Blacks were largely blocked from educational opportunities that would lead to economic success (Seekings 2008).

With the advent of apartheid, every South African citizen was obliged to register as a member of an officially designated race. However, it was not always clear-cut whether South Africans were white, “**coloured**,” or natives. Prior to 1948, racial status had a contextual quality: people with some African descent were sometimes classified as white if they had lived among whites most of their lives, and people with no European descent could be designated as coloured if they were educated and of a certain class status. In 1950, the Nationalist government passed the **Population Registration Act**, which mandated that every citizen be issued an identity document specifying his or her race as white, native, or coloured (Posel 2001).

The Population Registration Act defined three racial groups in South Africa:

A white person is one who in appearance is, or who is generally accepted as, a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a coloured person.

A native is a person who is in fact or is generally accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa.

A coloured person is one who is not a white person or a native. (Posel 2001, 102)

The category “Indian” was later added in reference to people of South Asian ancestry, and “native” was replaced by the labels “Bantu” and “Black.” The South African definitions of race were social definitions; they did not depend exclusively on ancestral or physical characteristics. Instead, white people were those who were socially accepted as white, blacks were those accepted as native Africans, and all the rest were coloureds. With apartheid, many people who had been socially accepted as white were designated as coloured by the

coloured According to South Africa’s 1950 Population Registration Act, a person who is not white or native.

Population Registration Act 1950 act that defined three racial groups in South Africa—white, native, and coloured—and mandated that every citizen be issued identification specifying his or her race.

South African government and forced to move from the whites-only neighborhoods in which they were living. Apartheid was designed in part to ensure white racial purity. However, most South Africans knew it was very difficult for any white South African to be sure that his or her ancestry did not include any nonwhites (Posel 2001).

Under apartheid, South Africa was divided into four provinces and ten rural homelands. Whites lived in the provinces, along with Asians, coloureds, and some blacks. The vast majority of blacks were relegated to the economically marginalized homelands, which constituted only 13 percent of the land area of South Africa and offered very few economic opportunities for their residents. The average unemployment rate in the homelands continues to be about 75 percent (Özler 2007). For this reason, many black families rely on remittances from other family members who work outside the homelands and send money home.

From the 1950s to the 1980s, many black South Africans who had formerly lived in the provinces were forcibly relocated to the homelands. The provinces contained the best economic opportunities, and their mortality profiles and rates of infectious diseases were similar to those of middle-income countries such as Brazil or Mexico. By contrast, the homelands looked more like the much poorer neighboring countries in southern Africa such as Zimbabwe (Burgard 2002).



▲ Sign designating outdoor space for whites only. South Africa, 1976.

During the 1970s and 1980s, South Africa began to see mass mobilizations in opposition to apartheid. In 1990, these mobilizations, combined with international pressure, led the government to announce its intention to end apartheid (Marx 1996), which it finally did in 1994.

The fight to end apartheid in South Africa was long and bloody and was waged on both domestic and international fronts. During the 1960s and 1970s, South Africans, inspired by Ghandi, engaged in peaceful protests and civil disobedience. One of the most well-known protests is the Soweto uprising. On June 16, 1976, South African students in Soweto took to the streets in a peaceful protest against apartheid and educational inequality. Their protest was met with extreme police violence: police shot and killed hundreds of schoolchildren. The violent response to this youth-led protest galvanized youth activists across the country. Activists from the Black Consciousness (BC) Movement, led by Steve Biko, and the African National Congress (ANC), founded by Nelson Mandela, began to intensify their anti-apartheid efforts. In 1977, Biko was arrested because of his political activity. He was beaten and tortured during his detainment, and died as a result. As state repression ramped up, so did the opposition. During the 1980s, mass mobilization against apartheid intensified both in South Africa and around the world. For example, in 1988, 155 universities and colleges in the United States had fully or partially divested themselves from South Africa, putting serious financial pressure on the country. These decades of struggle finally bore fruit when apartheid was officially ended in 1994 (Knight 1990; South African Democracy Education Trust 2004).

South African Coloured Identity

When asked about his racial identity, Xam, a father, mechanical worker, and part-time DJ in South Africa, reflected: “Nobody sat me down and said, ‘We are coloured because we are this.’ It was never like that.” But he did recall one influential experience when the concept of race became meaningful in his life.

He was a young boy attending elementary school in a primarily coloured township, Mitchells Plain, in South Africa in the late 1970s. Demonstrations against the repressive, white minority, apartheid government were becoming more common across the nation. During one particularly heated struggle, Xam recalls that his “school was teargassed by accident, supposedly” by the police.

Xam raced home to find his mother, a school teacher, hiding older kids who had been part of the demonstration. “And, um, that evening, my mother *had* to have that conversation.” Xam said that her approach was careful, that she did not want to

Voices

(continued)

Continued

instill hate in him, but that she did explain: “*at the moment, in this country, we are not seen the same as other people.*”

After that day, Xam began to put things together thinking, “Okay, the complexion of the people that are chasing me—is not the complexion that I have, so, obviously I came to that on my own, you know.” He recognized that he, as a coloured South African, looked, talked, and experienced life differently from the white officers who came into his community. Whereas many in his community lived in cramped spaces and lacked access to resources like safe schools and reliable transportation, the white officers arrived in shiny police vehicles and commanded power in all interactions. Xam not only realized differences between his race and theirs, but also learned that the officers’ group was considered “right” and was afforded power and privileges that members of his own racial group were not. As he shared: “I was born into racism. I was born into the apartheid system.”

Given the apartheid goal of complete separation of the races, most people in Mitchells Plain were coloured, defined by apartheid legislation as “a person who is not a white person or a native [black].” Throughout apartheid, the coloured group was mainly viewed as a people who had racial mixture in their lineage, but also included anyone who could not fit into the black or white category, such as people of ‘Malay’ descent who were brought to the Cape as slaves from Southeast Asia.

It was resisting the white Afrikaners in power that taught Xam of his coloured identity and also about a broader collective identity as South Africans of color. “We needed to unify so that we could fight one enemy” Xam explained. Many South Africans felt similarly to Xam and joined the United Democratic Front (UDF), which was launched in 1983 in Mitchells Plain. The UDF swelled to over three million multiracial members and was a largely successful organizer against the apartheid state. With internal civic action and external pressures from international states and agencies, the apartheid system began to crumble.

Finally, in 1994, South Africa held its first election by universal adult suffrage. A majority of South Africans voted for Nelson Mandela, a black African and former political prisoner and candidate supported by the African National Council (ANC), securing his victory as the president of the new Republic of South Africa. Since then, the ANC has remained in power. The end of apartheid represented a shift from an oppressive, white, minority-led system, to a black, majority-led democratic system. Race continues to shape individual life experiences, but there are now clear protections against discrimination on the basis of race.

However, this transition in power has once again complicated the ways many coloureds think about race and their place in the new South Africa. As Xam explains, “the so-called coloured people feel that they have been betrayed. They feel that they gave their lives. They gave their futures for the liberation struggle, and they were sold out.” Despite their action against apartheid, many coloureds feel they have been left out of the transition of power. Coloureds today continue to suffer, with low levels of educational attainment, high rates of unemployment, and poor health outcomes.

Still frustrated with the plight and position of coloureds, Xam is one of many who are seeking to redefine what it means to be coloured today. Xam would like greater recognition of the Khoikhoi, the indigenous South Africans to whom many coloured people trace their roots.

Often called Bushmen, the Khoikhoi were the first to interact with the Dutch in the Cape. Many coloureds believe that identifying as Khoikhoi further distances them from the legacy of apartheid and better solidifies their rights to land and resources in South Africa. Xam is now prepared for another fight: “This is who I am. This is who I need to be. This who I need to live like, and I need to stand for that. Because, you know what? On this planet is enough space for me to be me. And if you’re not gonna allow me for that space to be me, I’m gonna fight you for that space to be me.”

Source: Pirtle 2017.

The Persistence of Inequality in the Post-Apartheid Era

Although apartheid was dismantled, racial inequality has not been eradicated. Racial segregation is no longer legally enforced, but it continues in schools and residential areas. About 15 percent of African students and a larger percentage of coloured and Indian students are enrolled in previously white schools. Meanwhile, white students have not enrolled in formerly black schools, which remain exclusively black and primarily underprivileged (Moodley and Adam 2000).

A discussion of inequality in South Africa would be incomplete without mentioning the AIDS epidemic. About 17 percent of adults aged fifteen to forty-nine in South Africa are HIV positive—one of the highest rates in the world. The AIDS epidemic is both raced and gendered: the majority of people with HIV are African women (Morrell, Jewkes, and Lindegger 2012).

One of the most notable changes since the end of apartheid has been the rise of an African middle class. Today, in South Africa, nearly all poor people are of African descent, as are most of the working class, and the middle and upper

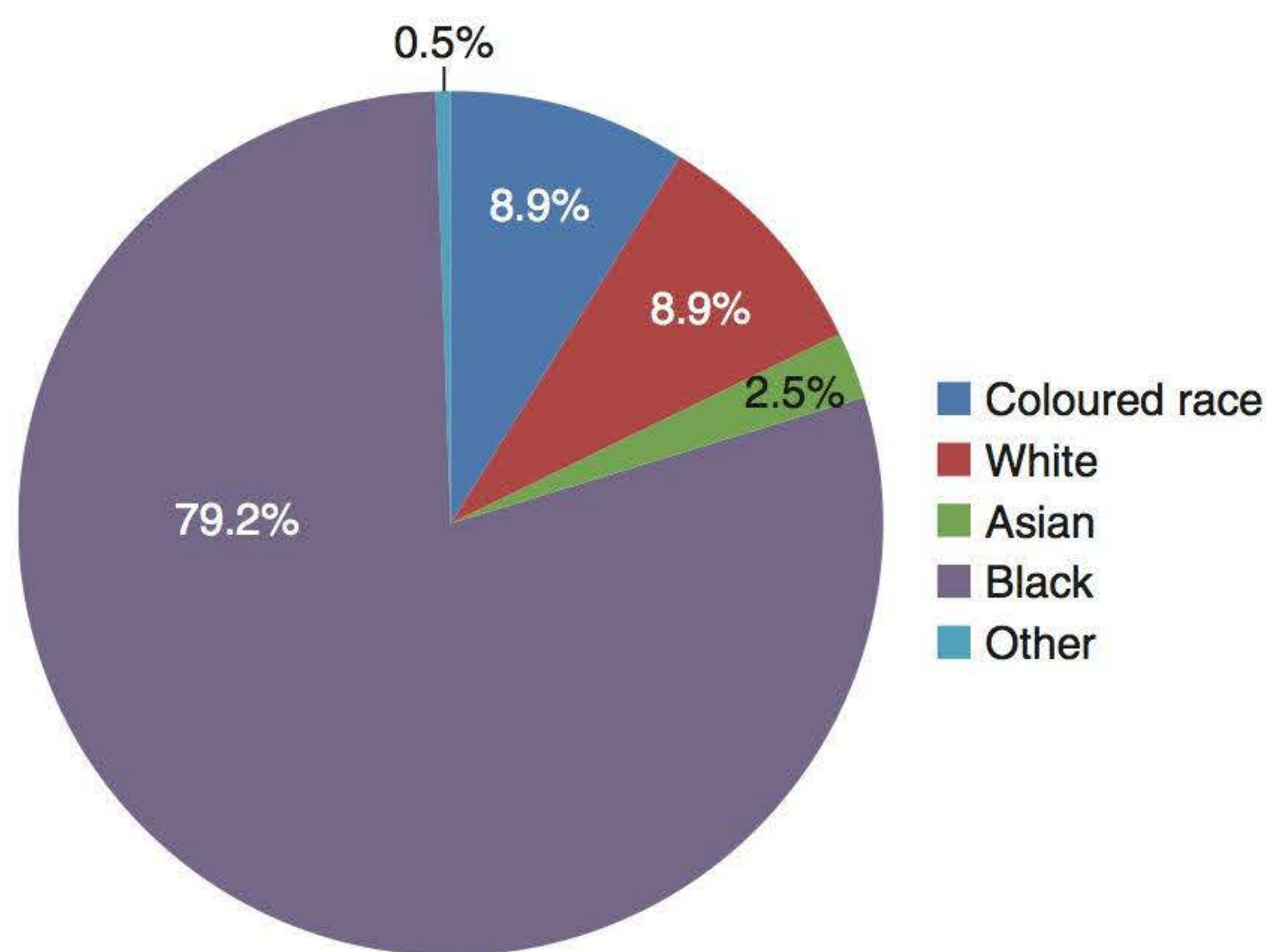


FIGURE 15-2.
South Africans, by race,
2011

Source: South African Census
(2011).

classes include white as well as African-descended people. The rise of blacks into the middle class was accomplished by providing better educational opportunities as well as by enforcing affirmative action policies. For example, the 1998 Employment Equity Act required mid-sized and large private employers to set and enforce diversity targets (Seekings 2008). Still, in 2010, 28 percent of blacks in South Africa were unemployed, compared with 5 percent of whites (Morrell et al. 2012).

South Africa's 2012 census revealed that racial inequality continues to be a problem. Over three-quarters of South Africans are black, and

they earn, on average, about one-sixth of what whites earn (see Figure 15-2).

The end of apartheid has meant the end of absolute white racial dominance in South Africa. However, the country continues to be tremendously unequal, and a disproportionate number of blacks remain at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. The end of apartheid in South Africa has actually led to more overall inequality. The country's Gini coefficient—a measure of inequality on a scale of 0 to 1 (see Chapter Nine)—increased from 0.5 in 1995 to 0.73 in 2005 (Morrell et al. 2012), and then decreased to 62.5 in 2013. To achieve a more just society, South Africa will have to address both race and income inequality.

research focus

The Politics of White Youth Identity in South Africa

With the dismantling of apartheid, many exclusively white schools in South Africa opened their doors to black and coloured children. Sociologist Nadine Dolby was curious about how white students experienced and talked about this transition. To find out, she conducted research at Fernwood High School in Durban, South Africa, in 1996.

Under apartheid, Fernwood was a white government school. In 1991, it opened its doors to black and coloured pupils. By 1996, over 60 percent of the students were black, 7 percent were coloured, and about 3 percent were Asian. Whites constituted only 30 percent of the student body at that point, and many of the white students as well as the white teachers were not happy about the rapid transition.

Most of the white students would have left the school if they could have, but they had not done well enough academically to get into the more prestigious and whiter public schools in Durban.

Dolby found that white students at Fernwood, similar to those in the United States, use the discursive phrase “I don’t want to sound racist, but . . .” when talking about blacks in South Africa. In interviews, white students often described how blacks were violent toward whites. However, these students supported their accounts with stories of violence they had seen in the media or heard about through their friends. Dolby reported that when the white students told these stories, they positioned themselves and other whites as morally superior and not prone to similar acts of violence.

Dolby contended that white students are scared of black violence as well as black economic prosperity. White students come from families that have been able to do well financially because of the privileges traditionally associated with whiteness in South Africa. However, ending apartheid has meant that whites no longer have a monopoly on the labor market. Thus, even though whites continue to experience privilege in South Africa, they do not have the enormous economic advantage their parents had.

One white student told Dolby: “It is hard to get used to seeing so many black people now having big cars, now having good clothing.” Another white student claimed that many black people are homeless but have expensive cars. Others commented on the flashy fashion styles of black students. As white students struggled to understand their own loss of economic security, they claimed that blacks do not know how to spend money wisely. These claims give them moral authority and a sense of righteousness.

Dolby explained that the whiteness with which white South Africans at Fernwood identify is not so much a South African but a global whiteness. These students listen to music produced in other countries and dream of one day emigrating to a country where, they perceive, whites still have the upper hand.

For Discussion

1. Do you think there are parallels between white South Africans and whites in the United States?
2. Do you think that whites in South Africa experienced fear after the abolition of apartheid?
3. How do you think the end of apartheid affected black students in South Africa?

RACE AND RACISM IN BRAZIL

Both Brazil and the United States were once inhabited by an indigenous population and later colonized by Europeans who brought African slaves with them. In addition, both countries experienced large waves of immigration from Europe and Asia after the emancipation of their African slaves. Yet Brazil differs dramatically from the United States, as well as from South Africa, in that it never instituted formalized legal segregation. Similar to France, Brazil has invoked a particular brand of nationalism—“We are all Brazilians”—to deny the possibility of racial inequality in the country.

Portuguese Colonization and the Slave Trade in Brazil

The history of race and racism in Brazil begins with the landing of the Portuguese in 1500. Soon afterward, Portuguese colonists began to capture members of the indigenous population and force them to work on sugarcane plantations. The brutal treatment of indigenous Brazilians, combined with diseases brought over by the Portuguese, quickly decimated the native population. The Portuguese therefore turned to African slaves as an alternative labor force. By the time the slave trade ended in 1850, over 3 million Africans had been forcibly brought to Brazil as slaves. Brazil was the last country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery, ending it in 1888 (Telles 2004).

Very few Portuguese women lived in Brazil during the time of slavery, and not surprisingly the Portuguese men there frequently engaged in consensual and nonconsensual sexual relations with African, indigenous, and mixed-race women. As a result, large numbers of mixed-race children were born in Brazil. When slavery ended in 1888, the population was overwhelmingly nonwhite (Skidmore 1993).

Whitening Through Immigration and Intermarriage

Believing that whites were superior to other racial groups, the leaders of Brazil came up with a plan to promote European immigration in the aftermath of slavery. The Brazilian government paid European immigrants' passage to Brazil, with the goal of whitening the country. In the four decades after emancipation in 1888, more than 2 million European immigrants arrived in the city of São Paulo alone, nearly a million of whom had had their passage paid for by the national government (Andrews 1991, 54).

North American and European intellectuals lamented Brazil's large non-white population and predicted a dim future for the country. In response, Brazilian intellectuals developed their own idea of racial progress. This new

ideology put forth racial mixture as Brazil's hope for the future. Brazilian elites believed that white genes were stronger than black or indigenous genes, and that intermarriage between whites and other groups would lead to a gradual whitening of the country. Through intermarriage, Brazil would be able to progress from black to mulatto to white (Skidmore 1990).

Brazilian intellectuals accepted European ideas of white superiority but rejected the notion that racial mixture was problematic. They argued that Brazil was becoming a white nation through a process of racial mixing, called *mestiçagem*. Sílvio Romero (1851–1915), one of Brazil's foremost literary critics of the late nineteenth century, proclaimed the *mestizo*—an individual with a mixed black, white, and Indian background—to be the prototypical Brazilian and the person best suited to Brazil's tropical climate. Like other Brazilians, Romero predicted that racial mixture would lead to whiteness.

Many Brazilian thinkers embraced this whitening theory (Eakin 1985; Skidmore 1990). At the same time, scholars such as the lawyer and historian Oliveira Vianna (1883–1951) demonstrated that the white population was increasing. Comparing the 1872 and 1890 censuses, Vianna argued that whites had increased from 38 to 44 percent of the Brazilian population, while blacks had fallen from 20 percent to less than 15 percent (Skidmore 1990). Vianna contended that the whitening project was working and that Brazil would eventually be a whitened nation.

This self-appraisal as a whitening nation was accompanied by the rise of some individuals of African descent into the elite, including the writer Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839–1908) and the scientist Juliano Moreira (1873–1932). Some prominent Brazilians saw racial mixture as acceptable insofar as it was a temporary waypoint on the road to racial whitening. Others, such as Octavio Domingues, argued that the success of some mulattos was proof that constructive miscegenation (racial interbreeding) was viable and that mulattos were not inferior to whites (Stepan 1991). Whereas in the United States, miscegenation was prohibited, in Brazil, it was encouraged. Elite Brazilians supported interracial marriages, and darker Brazilians sought out lighter partners with the intention of having lighter children (Twine 1998).

The celebration of *mestiçagem* became the hallmark of Brazilianness and reached its apex in the work of Gilberto Freyre (1900–1987), a Brazilian social historian. Freyre published his book *Casa Grande e Senzala* in 1933. This book described Brazil as a thoroughly racially mixed country. However, instead of arguing that Brazil's mixture began with slavemasters forcing themselves on African slaves, Freyre argued that the mixture was a result of the natural attraction between blacks and whites. He took this mixture as evidence of

mestiçagem The Portuguese word for racial mixing.

mestizo A Brazilian racial category describing a mixture of black, white, and Indian.

racial democracy A society in which color and ethnic differences do not affect life chances.

racial democracy in Brazil, a country he saw as free of the racist legacies that one could find in the United States. Freyre argued further that the racial mixture between Brazilians meant that there were no racial groups in Brazil and thus no racial discrimination. Freyre and other writers compared Brazil favorably with the United States and Nazi Germany and argued that Brazil's **racial democracy** should be a model for the world (Twine 1998). A racial democracy is a society in which color and ethnic differences do not affect life chances.

The Racial Democracy Myth in Brazil and Affirmative Action

The myth of Brazil's racial democracy attracted international attention. In the 1950s, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sponsored several research projects designed to reveal Brazil's secret to its racial harmony. To their surprise, this funding led to a series of published works that debunked Brazil's supposed racial democracy and showed that, to the contrary, racial inequality was pervasive in the country. These studies revealed disparities in education, income, and health among black, brown, and white Brazilians.

Racial inequality in Brazil continues to be pervasive. In 1999, blacks accounted for 45 percent of the total population but 64 percent of the nation's poor. In 2003, only 2 percent of the deputies in the national congress identified as black, and none of Brazil's ambassadors were black. In that same year, the average income for white Brazilians was Rs1480, compared with Rs780 for black and mixed Brazilians. By 2013, the average income for white Brazilians was Rs2097, compared with Rs1213 for black and mixed Brazilians—proportionately almost the same as in 2003 (Nolen 2015).

In the early 2000s, state policy on race in Brazil changed dramatically. The government shifted from denying the existence of racial inequality to admitting that racism was a problem and instituting affirmative action policies as a form of redress. At the national and state levels, policymakers introduced racial quotas; notably, three states approved laws that reserved 40 percent of university admission slots for Afro-Brazilians (Htun 2004). By 2013, a majority of Brazil's federal and state universities, which are attended by over three-quarters of Brazilian students in public higher education, used a quota system to determine acceptance. The quotas are based on race and class and mandate that a certain percentage of the university entrants must be black, brown, or indigenous, or have attended public secondary schools. In contrast to public education, however, there are very few affirmative action policies in the employment arena in Brazil (Telles and Paixão 2013).



▲ A *favela* (slum) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with luxury buildings beyond.

Scholars such as Stanley Bailey (2009), Robin Sheriff (2001), and Donna Goldstein (2003) maintain that the ideal of racial democracy in Brazil, though not an accurate depiction of reality, is a crucial part of Brazilian society. They argue that racial democracy is a utopian ideal to which Brazilians aspire. Bailey (2009) argues that most Brazilians recognize the existence of societal racism. Yet, because they uphold racial democracy as an ideal, black, white, and brown Brazilians are all supportive of anti-racist organizing and race-specific policies such as affirmative action. In the United States, most blacks recognize the prevalence of racism, whereas most whites deny it. In contrast, in Brazil, whites, browns, and blacks all recognize the pervasiveness of racism in fairly similar proportions. In Rio de Janeiro, for example, only 7 percent of whites and 3 percent of blacks reported that there was no racial prejudice in Brazil (Bailey 2009). A study in São Paulo revealed that 67 percent of whites and 67 percent of blacks agreed that there was discrimination against nonwhites in Brazil (Bailey 2009).

Bailey (2009) found that Brazilians of all colors support race-targeted policies similar to affirmative action. However, he also reported differences in the level of support for such policies: 46 percent of white Brazilians support

university quotas, compared with 63 percent of nonwhites. This difference is much less stark than that in the United States, where 30 percent of whites versus 80 percent of blacks support university quotas that favor the admission of black applicants (Bailey 2009).

voices

Brazil's Color Bind

When Daniele de Araújo found out six years ago that she was pregnant, she set out from her small house on a dirt lane in the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro and climbed a mountain. It is not a big mountain, the green slope that rises near her home, but the area is controlled by drug dealers, so she was anxious, hiking up. But she had something really important to ask of God, and she wanted to be somewhere she felt that the magnitude of her request would be clear.

She told God she wanted a girl, and she wanted her to be healthy, but one thing mattered above all: “The baby has to be white.”

Ms. de Araújo knows about the quixotic outcomes of genetics: She has a white mother and a black father, sisters who can pass for white, and a brother nearly as dark-skinned as she is—“I’m really black,” she says. Her husband, Jonatas dos Praseres, also has one black and one white parent, but he is light-skinned—when he reported for his compulsory military service, an officer wrote “white” as his race on the forms.

And so, when their baby arrived, the sight of her filled Ms. de Araújo with relief: Tiny Sarah Ashley was as pink as the sheets she was wrapped in. Best of all, as she grew, it became clear that she had straight hair, not cabelo ruim—“bad hair”—as tightly curled black hair is universally known in Brazil. These days, Sarah Ashley has tawny curls that tumble to the small of her back; they are her mother’s great joy in life. The little girl’s skin tone falls somewhere between those of her parents—but she was light enough for them to register her as “white,” just as they had hoped. (Many official documents in Brazil ask for “race and/or colour” alongside other basic identifying information.)



Daniele de Araújo and her family.

Daniele de Araújo with Jonatas dos Praseres and their daughter, Sarah Ashley: Her family “congratulated me,” she says, when they first met her future husband, “because I was lightening the family, right? It felt like I was doing some great thing.” Still, she prayed that Sarah Ashley be born light-skinned.

Ms. de Araújo and Mr. dos Praseres keep the photos from their 2005 wedding in a red velvet album on the lone shelf in their living room. The glossy pictures show family members of a dozen different skin colours, arm in arm, faces crinkled in stiff grins for the posed portraits. There are albums with similar pictures in living rooms all over this country: A full one-third of marriages in Brazil are interracial, said to be the highest rate in the world. (In Canada, despite hugely diverse cities such as Vancouver and Toronto, the rate is under five per cent.) That statistic is the most obvious evidence of how race and colour in Brazil are lived differently than they are in other parts of the world.

But a range of colours cannot disguise a fundamental truth, says Ms. de Araújo: There is a hierarchy, and white is at the top.

Many things are changing in this country. Ms. de Araújo left school as a teenager to work as a maid—about the only option open to a woman with skin as dark as hers—but now she has a professional job in health care and a house of her own, things she could not have imagined 15 years ago. Still, she says, “This is Brazil.” And there is no point being precious about it. Black is beautiful, but white—white is just easier. Even middle-class life can still be a struggle here. And Sarah Ashley’s parents want her life to be easy.

Brazil’s history of colonialism, slavery and dictatorship, followed by tumultuous social change, has produced a country that is at once culturally homogenous and chromatically wildly diverse. It is a cornerstone of national identity that Brazil is racially mixed—more than any country on Earth, Brazilians say. Much less discussed, but equally visible—in every restaurant full of white patrons and black waiters, in every high rise where the black doorman points a black visitor toward the service elevator—is the pervasive racial inequality.

Brazil’s experience stands in marked contrast with the way those issues are playing out in the United States. A mass shooting like that in Charleston, S.C., allegedly carried out by a white supremacist, would be unimaginable here. So would a speech by the president calling on the country to confront its racial inequality. What happened to Rachel Dolezal—a blue-eyed white woman who chose to pass as black, and was pilloried—is equally alien to Brazil, where racial identity is always fluid, and has been wilfully subsumed

(continued)



Continued

into questions of colour. Many Brazilians, of all races, contrast their own country favourably with the U.S., where the discussion of racism is overt and often angry.

Yet discrimination is every bit as powerful a force in Brazil, and it exacts a high price here, too. This cost takes obvious forms (for example, the disproportionately huge number of young black men in prison) and more subtle ones, such as the conversations that Ms. de Araújo and Mr. dos Praseres have about their daughter, and whether she is white “enough.”

But there is change afoot here, as well: It is sluggish, may prove to be transient, and is certainly fragile. But for all that, it is happening, through both institutional reforms and personal choices. In the process, it is calling into question centuries-old constructions of identity, and offering people such as Ms. de Araújo whole new ways of imagining their lives.

Source: Nolen 2015.

Racial Categories in Brazil Today

Brazil has often been contrasted to the United States in terms of racial labeling. The traditional thinking has been that Brazil has many racial categories, whereas the United States has only a few; that racial identity in Brazil, but not the United States, alters as one moves up socially; and that race relations in Brazil are more harmonious than in the United States. Furthermore, the thinking has been that brown Brazilians receive privileges that black Brazilians do not, whereas in the United States brown and black people are lumped together. Over the past twenty years, each of these assumptions has been either completely disproven or shown to have much more nuance.

One popular comparison of Brazil to the United States involves the argument that in the United States, anyone with one drop of black blood is black, whereas in Brazil, people are considered black only if they have no evidence of white ancestry. Whereas in the United States race refers to ancestry, in Brazil it has to do mostly with skin color and physical appearance. One way to characterize this difference is as genotype versus phenotype. **Genotype** refers to genetic makeup, whereas **phenotype** refers to physical appearance. Of course, these terms are related, for one’s ancestry plays an important role in determining one’s physical appearance. Nevertheless, a person in Brazil with a black grandmother who has no visible African ancestry would not be considered “black,” but such a person could be considered black in the United States.

genotype Genetic makeup.

phenotype Physical appearance.

research focus

Racial Ideology and Black–White Interracial Marriages in Rio de Janeiro

Scholars of race in Brazil have long argued that darker-skinned individuals in that country aspire to marry people with lighter skin with the goal of increasing their social status and having children lighter than themselves. Sociologist Chinyere Osuji was intrigued by this practice, often called “whitening,” and interviewed Brazilians in interracial relationships to find out what they think about whitening.

Osuji interviewed twenty-five married couples composed of one black and one white partner. None of the black partners told her they had married with the goal of having lighter children or attaining higher social status; rather, they cited their partner’s intelligence and social skills as the qualities that attracted them. When she asked what they liked physically about their partners, none of them mentioned skin color. They found it offensive for anyone to suggest that they had married a white partner because of his or her color.

Whereas earlier studies of interracial marriages in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s showed that many Brazilians openly admitted to desiring a lighter partner, Osuji’s study shows that things have changed. However, her interviewees also told her that their family members made comments about their interracial marriages. The neighbors of one white woman, for example, commented that she would have children with “hard hair” because of her marriage to a black man. A black woman reported that her cousins had commented that her children would be lighter because of her marriage to a white man. Although the people Osuji interviewed argued that they did not marry their partner because of his or her race, their friends and family members still saw their relationship through the lens of whitening or darkening.

Osuji observed that her research showed that there is no longer a universal aspiration for whitening in Brazil and that the appreciation of blackness is growing. Black–white couples in Brazil did not frame their relationships as an attempt at whitening, and they were offended by any such suggestion.

Nevertheless, the perception that lighter is better has not altogether disappeared, as evidenced by the value-laden comments from friends and family.

(continued)

For Discussion

1. What has changed in Brazilian race relations? What has not?
2. Why do people marry across races? Why don't they?
3. Do you think the concept of social whitening applies to the United States?

Source: Osuji 2013.

Studies on skin color and social status have shown that skin color matters in the United States in much the same way as in Brazil. Lighter-skinned people of African descent in both countries have certain privileges that their darker-skinned counterparts do not. The perception of whether a person is black in the United States is influenced to some degree by his or her social status (Saperstein 2012). Studies of racial attitudes in Brazil have demonstrated similar findings.

Overall, Brazil *is* different from the United States, though this difference is not easily captured largely because of course neither country is static and because racial ideologies are constantly in flux in both places. This flexibility is at the heart of what makes racial ideologies so powerful.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In the United States and South Africa, the end of official segregation led to the growth of an African-descended middle class. In Brazil, the introduction of quotas for university admissions has contributed to larger numbers of people of African descent attaining middle-class status. In France, there is also a black middle class, albeit a small one. In each place, the recognition of racial discrimination and attempts to do something about it have led to concessions. At the same time, the poverty profiles of large numbers of people of African descent in these countries have changed little.

In each of these countries, people of African descent have achieved positions of political and economic power. In South Africa, Nelson Mandela became the first black president in 1994; the United States did not elect its first black president, Barack Obama, until 2008. In Brazil, a few black politicians have had success. In France, however, politicians of Arab or African descent continue to

be notably absent. One pattern common to these three countries is that racial ideologies have changed to some degree, yet inequality persists.

In Chapter One, we saw that racial ideologies are products of the colonial encounter. Ideas of race and racism emerged to justify the enslavement of Africans and the genocide of Native Americans. We also saw how racial ideologies justified colonial endeavors in Africa. This last chapter drives home the point that 500 years later, we are still dealing with the repercussions of the colonial legacy—both in the United States and around the world.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Key Terms

apartheid 444	Boer War 454	<i>mestizo</i> 463
<i>les sans-papiers</i> 449	coloured 455	racial democracy 464
<i>banlieues</i> 449	Population Registration Act 455	genotype 468
<i>Afrikaners</i> 454	<i>mestiçagem</i> 463	phenotype 468

15.1 How do other countries differ from the United States in racial dynamics? (pp. 443–446)

- The American racial structure is just one of many possible ways in which racial hierarchies could be organized.

Review Questions

- » What are some differences and similarities in the manifestation of colonialism in France, South Africa, and Brazil?

Critical Thinking

- » Pick one of the three countries discussed and explain how dominant racial ideologies there have transformed over time.
- » How have racial demographics influenced racial ideologies in the countries discussed?

15.2 In France, what are the effects of the government's insistence on not recognizing racial categories? (pp. 446–453)

- In France, the government does not recognize that there are disparities between French people with European ancestry and French people with African ancestry, yet these disparities are persistent and deep.

Review Questions

- » How have France's colonial endeavors influenced the racial and ethnic makeup of France today?
- » What is the difference between France's former colonies in Africa and its overseas departments?
- » Characterize the extent of racial and ethnic inequality in France today.

Critical Thinking

- » Compare the racial dynamics in France to those in the United States. How are they different? How are they similar?

15.3 In South Africa, how does the legacy of apartheid affect racial dynamics? (pp. 454–461)

- Apartheid has ended in South Africa, yet racial inequalities persist.

Review Questions

- » How was the Boer War important in the history of South Africa?
- » What is apartheid?

Critical Thinking

- » How was apartheid in South Africa similar to or different from the Jim Crow Era in the United States?

15.4 In Brazil, how does the government-promoted idea of a racial democracy affect race relations? (pp. 462–470)

- Brazil is no longer portrayed as a racial paradise, yet it is clear that racial dynamics in Brazil are distinct from those in the United States.

Review Questions

- » What are some strategies Brazil historically used in the effort to whiten the country? Were they successful?
- » What is the racial democracy myth in Brazil?

Critical Thinking

- » Compare the racial dynamics in Brazil to those in the United States. How are they different? How are they similar?

Talking about Race

The discussions in this chapter make it clear that people who are perceived as black experience marginalization in the United States, South Africa, Brazil, and France. At the same time, these four countries vary in how they define blackness. How could you use this knowledge—that a person can be black in the United States, coloured in South Africa, and white in Brazil—in a conversation about race and racism? What does this tell us about the social construction of race?

Glossary

- 1851 Indian Appropriations Act** Legislation that created reservations for Native Americans and provided funds for tribes to relocate to these communal lands.
- 1871 Indian Appropriations Act** Legislation that declared that the U.S. government would no longer sign treaties with Native American tribes.
- 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act** The first major piece of immigration legislation; it was overtly racist in that it specifically prohibited Chinese laborers from entering the United States.
- 1887 Dawes Act** Legislation that forced Native Americans to give up their communal lands and claim individual ownership of their lands.
- 1934 Indian Reorganization Act** Legislation that ended allotment and facilitated tribal self-government to a degree.
- 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act** Legislation that put an end to the racially biased quotas set forth in the 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act and the Immigration Act of 1924. It set a universal quota of 20,000 immigrants for every country in the world.
- 1984 Crime Control Act** An act that established mandatory minimum sentences and eliminated federal parole.
- 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)** A series of immigration provisions that (1) offered a legalization option for undocumented workers living in the United States and (2) imposed sanctions on employers who hired undocumented workers.
- abstract liberalism** The first of Bonilla-Silva's "frames" of color-blind racism. It involves using liberal ideas such as equality of opportunity or freedom of choice to explain or justify racial inequality.
- acculturation** A process by which immigrants adopt the behaviors and preferences of the host society.
- achievement gap** The disparate educational outcomes of whites, Asians, blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans.
- acting white** A term used to refer to nonwhites who are perceived as behaving in ways associated with white people.
- adultify** When a teacher or other authority figure interprets children's behavior as if they were adults.
- affirmative action** Policies and procedures designed to combat ongoing discrimination in schools and the workplace.
- Afrikaners** Descendants of the Dutch colonists who settled in South Africa.
- Allotment and Assimilation Period** The oppression of Native Americans that took place from the 1870s to the 1920s, when two-thirds of Native American lands were lost and indigenous children were obliged to go to federal boarding schools where they were taught to shun their native ways and languages.
- Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986** Legislation that imposed even more mandatory minimum sentences. Most significantly, it set a five-year mandatory minimum sentence for offenses involving 100 grams of heroin, 500 grams of cocaine, or 5 grams of crack cocaine.
- Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988** Act that included a five-year mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack cocaine, with no evidence of intent to sell.
- anti-Semitism** Discrimination, hostility, or prejudice against Jews.
- Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA)** 1996 legislation that, among other provisions, eliminated judicial review of some

deportation orders and required mandatory detention for many noncitizens.

apartheid Legally enforced racial segregation that endured from 1948 to 1994 in South Africa.

asset-based social policy Proactive policy, at either the individual or structural level, designed to help narrow the wealth gap.

assets Cash in the bank and the value of all property, not only land but also houses, cars, stocks and bonds, and retirement savings.

assimilation A process whereby immigrants lose their ethnic distinctiveness and become part of the mainstream.

banlieues The outskirts or suburbs of French cities.

beauty queue A concept explaining how sexism and racism interact to create a queue of women ranging from the lightest to the darkest, in which the lightest get the most resources.

biological racism The idea that whites are genetically superior to nonwhites.

birthright citizenship Also known as *jus soli*, the concept that citizenship is determined by where one is born, not by the nationality, race, or citizenship of one's parents.

Black Lives Matter A hashtag and movement aimed at ending antiblack racism and violence in all its permutations.

Boer War Also called the Second War of Freedom; a conflict from 1899 to 1902 in which the British fought the Dutch to bring all of South Africa under British colonial power.

bracero program A U.S. government program that brought in temporary workers from Mexico between 1942 and 1964.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas Landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in which the Court determined that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal and in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Butterfly A stereotype of an Asian woman who is a demure, devoted, and submissive wife.

Cantina Girl A stereotype of a Latina as an available sexual object.

capitalism A profit-based economic system that produces inequality.

categorical exclusion A mechanism of labor market discrimination in which an applicant is not given an opportunity to interview for a job because of his or her race.

Chinese Exclusion Act Legislation that denied Chinese laborers entry to the United States.

civil rights Government-sanctioned protections against discrimination.

civil rights movement A series of mass protests between about 1950 and 1980 aiming to achieve racial equality in law and practice.

collective black People who are black, as well as other groups that receive similar treatment as black people, such as Hmong or dark-skinned Puerto Ricans.

colonialism The practice of acquiring political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

color-blind racism An ideology in which race is not explicitly acknowledged, but individual prejudices, acts of racial discrimination, and structures of inequality work to benefit whites.

color-blind universalism The idea that we should ignore skin color.

colorism The idea that, within races, lighter is better.

coloured According to South Africa's 1950 Population Registration Act, a person who is not white or native.

controlling images Raced, gendered, and classed depictions in the media that shape people's ideas of what African Americans are and are not.

cultural capital Cultural resources that offer social and other benefits.

cultural racism (Bonilla-Silva) The third of Bonilla-Silva's "frames" of color-blind racism, relying on culturally based explanations such as the idea that blacks live in poor

neighborhoods because they don't work hard enough to get out of the ghetto.

cultural racism A way of thinking that attributes disadvantaged racial groups' lack of prosperity to their behavior and culture, rather than to structural factors.

cumulative disadvantage perspective A framework used to explain the increasing divergence between black and white health outcomes that focuses on how disadvantages accumulate over the life course.

deindustrialization The process of decline in industrial activity in a region or economy that involves a shift from a manufacturing to a service economy.

diaspora A dispersion of people from their original homeland.

discrimination The practice of treating people differently.

dissimilarity index Measure that describes the extent to which two groups—such as blacks and whites—are found in equal proportions in all neighborhoods.

Dragon Lady A stereotype of an Asian woman as a sinister, crafty, and destructive seductress.

earnings gap Differences in annual earnings among groups.

embedded market A market economy embedded within interlocking systems of oppression and privilege.

enlightened racism The idea that the United States is a land of opportunity and that African Americans could do better if they only tried harder.

environmental justice Efforts to ensure the right to live in nontoxic neighborhoods, regardless of race.

environmental racism Institutional policies and practices that differentially affect the health outcomes or living conditions of people and communities based on race or color.

erotic capital A concept linking the attractiveness and sensuality of a woman to her skin color.

ethnic enclave economy Clusters of small businesses that primarily serve people of the same ethnicity and work to facilitate the success of co-ethnics.

ethnicity Group identity based on notions of similar and shared history, culture, and kinship.

eugenics The practice of controlled breeding to increase the occurrence of desirable characteristics in a population.

Federal Housing Administration (FHA) Government agency established in 1934 with the purpose of bolstering the economy and, in particular, the construction industry.

Freedom Riders Civil rights activists who rode buses in 1961 to test the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that segregation in interstate bus and rail stations was unconstitutional.

genocide The mass killing of a group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic or racial group.

genotype Genetic makeup.

Gini coefficient A measure of inequality, with 0 representing perfect equality and 100 representing perfect inequality.

global color hierarchy A worldwide system in which white (or light) skin is privileged and people—especially women—strive to become lighter.

hegemony When racial ideologies become so widely accepted that they become common sense.

hidden curriculum Underlying curriculum designed to reflect and promote the interests of the dominant class.

"Hispanic Paradox" The observation that even though Latinos have, on average, a lower socioeconomic status than whites, they have comparable health outcomes to whites.

honorary white People who are not considered white but can be treated as if they were white.

human capital Educational attainment, skills, and job experience.

human rights Universal rights such as access to health care, adequate housing, and education.

hypersegregation Instances of notably high levels of segregation.

hypodescent The idea that having any amount of black ancestry makes you black.

ideology A set of principles and ideas that benefit the dominant group.

Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) 1996 legislation under which legal permanent residents face mandatory deportation if they are convicted of “aggravated felonies.”

Immigration Act of 1917 Legislation expanding the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and denying entry to the United States for anyone coming from the “Asiatic Barred Zone,” which included India, Burma, the Malay States, Arabia, and Afghanistan.

Immigration Act of 1924 / Johnson-Reed Act Legislation that greatly reduced U.S. immigration from southern and eastern Europe by introducing quotas, or limits on the number of people from these countries who were allowed entry.

implicit bias Unreasoned judgmental inclinations that operate without our conscious awareness.

Indian Removal Act of 1830 Act that enabled the administration of U.S. president Andrew Jackson to use military power to displace at least 70,000 Native Americans, killing tens of thousands in the process.

individual racism When one person discriminates against another on the basis of race or ethnicity.

institutional agent A person who occupies a position of power and is able to access or negotiate resources for others.

institutional racism Policies, laws, and institutions that reproduce racial inequalities.

intelligence testing The attempt to quantify intellectual ability using scientific measures.

intersectionality A simultaneous look at multiple forms of oppression, such as race, ethnicity, class, and gender oppression.

isolation index Measure that compares a neighborhood’s demographics against citywide demographics.

Jezebel A name with biblical origins that has come to signify a stereotypically oversexed or hypersexual black woman.

Jim Crow laws A system of laws passed in the late 1800s denying nonwhites equality.

Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 Legislation that made passports and visas a requirement for entry to the United States and established national-origin quotas for European immigrants. The act was overtly racist in that it was designed to increase the Nordic population in the United States and put a stop to the growth of other groups.

legal permanent resident A foreign national who is granted the right to remain in the United States and who will be eligible for naturalization after a period of three to five years.

les sans-papiers Literally, “those without papers”; undocumented migrants in France.

life-course perspective A framework used to explain how health outcomes change over the life course.

Mammy A stereotypical image of a black maid.

McCarran Internal Security Act A 1950 U.S. law designed to combat Communism. It required members of the Communist Party in the United States to register with the federal government, and it allowed for the deportation of foreign nationals who were members of the Communist Party.

meme An idea, image, video, or phrase that spreads in a culture.

mestiçagem The Portuguese word for racial mixing.

mestizo A Latin American classification of people of European and indigenous ancestry.

minimization of racism The fourth “frame” of color-blind racism, suggesting that discrimination is no longer a central factor affecting life chances for people of color.

- “model minority” myth** The stereotype that Asians are the racial minority group that has “made it” in the United States.
- mulatto** The progeny of blacks and whites; a class of mixed-race people who are darker than whites but lighter than blacks.
- multiracial** A person whose parents identify with different racial groups.
- nativism** The presumed superiority of native-born citizens, favoring the allocation of resources to them over immigrants and promoting a fear of foreign cultures.
- naturalization** The process whereby people become citizens of a country where they do not have birthright citizenship.
- naturalization (Bonilla-Silva)** The second “frame” of color-blind racism, which permits people to explain racial phenomena as if they were natural.
- Naturalization Law of 1790** The first piece of U.S. legislation relating to the foreign-born, stating that only free white persons who had lived in the United States for at least two years were eligible for citizenship.
- neoliberalism** The ideology that open markets, liberalized trade, and privatization are the keys to economic success.
- new racism** An ideology in which it is not acceptable to make overtly racist statements, yet racial inequality persists.
- Nuremberg Code** Policy adopted by the U.S. Department of Defense in 1953 under which research subjects have to be informed that participation is voluntary and be provided with information about the nature, duration, and purpose of the research.
- Operation Wetback** Massive roundups of Mexicans by the U.S. Border Patrol from 1950 to 1954.
- oppositional culture** Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu’s (1986) thesis that black children receive signals from both the white and black communities that lead them to reject schooling as a route to success.
- Oriental Exclusion Act** 1924 legislation that expanded the Chinese Exclusion Act and prohibited most immigration from Asia to the United States.
- outsourcing** The practice of moving jobs once held by Americans overseas, where cheaper labor can be found.
- pardo** A Brazilian census category meaning “brown.”
- patriarchy** A system of oppression that ensures male dominance in terms of power and property.
- Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)** 1996 legislation that denied government services and benefits to legally present migrants.
- phenotype** Physical appearance.
- pigmentocracy** A society in which blacks, Asians, and Latinos have different social statuses according to their skin color.
- Plessy v. Ferguson** 1896 U.S. Supreme Court decision in which the Court determined that state laws requiring racial segregation in public facilities were constitutional, as long as they were “separate but equal.”
- Population Registration Act** 1950 act that defined three racial groups in South Africa—white, native, and coloured—and mandated that every citizen be issued identification specifying his or her race.
- predatory lender** A pawnshop, payday lender, or check cashing service that charges very high fees and interest rates.
- prejudice** The belief that people belong to distinct racial groups with innate hierarchical differences that can be measured and judged.
- prison-industrial complex** The vast network of prisons, jails, courts, police officers, and other elements that purport to reduce the amount of criminal activity in our society.
- pseudoscience** Beliefs or practices appearing to be scientific but not based on the scientific method.
- race** A social construction to describe a group of people who share physical and cultural traits as well as a common ancestry.

race-based job channeling A mechanism of labor market discrimination in which similarly qualified applicants of different races are told they should apply for job openings at different levels.

racial democracy A society in which color and ethnic differences do not affect life chances.

racial enclave economy An economy in which a business's success is both shaped and limited by the racial group membership of the business owner.

racial formation As defined by Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994), "the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed."

racial ideology A set of principles and ideas that (1) divides people into racial groups and (2) serves the interests of one group.

racial justice The creation of a society devoid of racial oppression.

racial microaggression Daily, commonplace insults and racial slights that cumulatively affect the psychological well-being of people of color.

racial profiling The use of race or ethnicity as grounds for suspicion.

racial project As defined by Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994), a way of giving meaning to racial categories through cultural representations and social structures.

racialization The process by which people come to be recognized as part of a racial group.

racialized assimilation The process through which immigrants adopt the racial identities of their host country.

racially restrictive covenants Contractual agreements that prevent the sale or lease of property within an area to nonwhites.

racism (1) The belief that races are populations of people whose physical differences are linked to significant cultural and social differences and that these innate hierarchical differences can be measured and judged. (2) The practice of subordinating races believed to be inferior.

Reaganomics The economic policies of former U.S. president Ronald Reagan, involving heavy cuts to a wide variety of social programs across the country.

recognition The first of Yamamoto's (2009) four dimensions of racial justice: recognizing the harms created by racism.

reconstruction The third of Yamamoto's (2009) four dimensions of racial justice: acting on the knowledge that harm has been inflicted on racial groups.

reparations The fourth of Yamamoto's (2009) four dimensions of racial justice: repairing damage and providing restitution for past harms against racial groups.

residential segregation The separation of different groups of people into distinct neighborhoods.

responsibility The second of Yamamoto's (2009) four dimensions of racial justice: acknowledging that someone is responsible for the harms inflicted on racial groups.

rhetorical strategy Way of expressing racist ideas without being labeled as racist.

Sapphire One of the main characters on the television show *Amos 'n' Andy*; the caricature of an angry black woman.

school-to-prison pipeline A set of practices that lead to children being funneled from public schools into the juvenile and criminal justice system.

scientific racism The use of science or pseudo-science to reproduce and/or justify racial inequalities.

segregation A policy of racial separation ensuring that whites have access to the best opportunities and facilities.

segregation index Measure that describes the percentage of 88 percent nonwhites who would have to move in order for the city to be fully residentially integrated.

shifting standards A mechanism of labor market discrimination in which job applicants of different races receive different responses despite similar levels of experience.

- skills mismatch hypothesis** The hypothesis that African American men in particular often do not have the skills required to secure work in the current economy.
- skin-color privilege** The privilege of being considered more beautiful, intelligent, or otherwise superior as a result of having lighter skin.
- skin-color stratification** A system in which resources such as income and status are distributed unequally according to skin color.
- slave codes** Laws enacted in the 1660s that clearly spelled out the differences between African slaves and European indentured servants.
- social capital** Relationships and networks that offer social and other benefits.
- social construction** An idea or way of viewing people based not on biological differences but on social perceptions.
- sociological theory of racism** Sociological explanation for how racial inequality is created and reproduced.
- spatial mismatch hypothesis** Hypothesis that African American families have been excluded from buying homes in the suburbs where much of the job growth has occurred, thereby creating a disconnect between where African Americans live and where the jobs are concentrated.
- split labor market** A difference in the price of labor for two or more groups of laborers.
- steering** A practice by which real estate agents show homes in white neighborhoods only to whites and homes in black neighborhoods only to blacks.
- stereotype** A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a type of person or thing.
- sterilization racism** Racist health care policies and practices that attempt to control the reproductive capacities of women of color.
- structural racism** Interinstitutional interactions across time and space that reproduce racial inequality.
- subprime loan** High-interest loan to someone at high risk of defaulting.
- Suffering Señorita** A stereotype of a Latina who suffers physical harm while protecting her Anglo love interest.
- symbolic violence** As described by Pierre Bourdieu (1984), the power of a socially dominant group to make its preferences, tastes, and norms appear to be superior to those of the nondominant group.
- systemic racism** As defined by Joe Feagin (2001), a diverse assortment of racist practices, encompassing daily microaggressions, deep-seated inequalities, historical inequalities, and anti-black ideologies.
- Trails of Tears** The forced displacement of the Cherokee of Georgia, the Apalachicola of Florida, the Peoria of Illinois, the Shawnee of Ohio, and a host of other tribes.
- underemployment** A category including jobless workers actively seeking work, people who are working part time yet are available to work full time, and those who have looked for work in the past year and yet are not actively seeking employment.
- Vamp** A stereotype of a Latina who uses devious and cunning stratagems to get what she wants.
- wage gap** Differences in hourly earnings (wages) among racial groups.
- wage of whiteness** As defined by W. E. B. DuBois in 1936, psychological benefits that white workers received by aligning with the dominant group, their white bosses, as opposed to developing working-class solidarity with recently freed black slaves.
- wealth** The sum total of a person's assets minus debt. Wealth is built up over a lifetime and passed on to the next generation through inheritances.
- weathering hypothesis** A framework used to explain the increasing divergence between black and white health outcomes that focuses

on how constant exposure to stress accelerates health decline for blacks.

white person of color A person who appears to be white, yet identifies with a nonwhite group.

white privilege The advantages inherent in being categorized as white.

white supremacy A system of racial stratification that places whites at the top of the hierarchy.

whitening The process by which a person and his or her offspring become whiter as a result of social status and/or intermarriage.

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